

Inspectors' Report
Public Inquiry
York Street Interchange

Spires Conference and Exhibition Centre
Belfast
10th to 12th November to 2015

Lead Inspector: J A Robb

Assistant Inspector: J A Cargo

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

Following our appointment as Lead Inspector and Assistant Inspector respectively, we conducted an Inquiry at the Spires Conference and Exhibition Centre, 2-10 Fisherwick Place, Belfast BT1 6DW, in November 2015, in connection with the proposed York Street Interchange Scheme.

The purpose of this Inquiry was to examine, together with the opinions expressed in relation to this project :-

- The Environmental Statement.
- The Notice of Intention to Make a Direction Order.
- The Notice of Intention to Make Vesting Order.

This documentation had been prepared by the Department for Regional Development, TransportNI (TNI) and their specialist Consultants.

We were also given the responsibility of creating a written Report following the conclusion of the Inquiry containing our considerations and recommendations and to submit this to TNI.

We noted that URS, the Consultants appointed to develop this Scheme, were acquired by AECOM in October 2014. Since the Environmental Statement (ES) and supporting documentation was researched and developed over a number of years, the name URS appears throughout the TNI written evidence. In order to maintain consistency the Consultants have been referred to as URS throughout this Report.

A Pre-Inquiry meeting took place on Monday 5th November in the Spires Centre, at which a number of administrative matters and other procedural issues were discussed.

The main Inquiry opened on Tuesday 10th November and ended in the late afternoon of Thursday 12th November, lasting a total of just under three full days. Subsequently, site visits took place with a number of the residents of the Little George's Street on the morning of Monday 16th November.

Copies of the Environmental Statement were made available for public inspection by TNI between 9th February and 10th March and comments on the proposed Scheme were invited by 10th March.

33 letters and e-mails objecting to aspects of the Scheme were received by the end of the consultation period, together with 9 others expressing support. A further 17 submissions contained comments and observations and in addition, 8 people and organisations made contact with TNI following the end of the consultation period. Two alternative proposals were submitted for consideration at the Inquiry.

We believe that all those who wished to do so were provided with ample opportunity to express their opinions about the proposed Scheme at the Inquiry and to be made aware of the views of all the other interested organisations, groups, and individuals.

A Public Inquiry Report is not intended to be a verbatim record of the proceedings. We have included a brief description of the proposal, a resume of the submissions which were made, together with other written objections and representations.

It should be noted that when assembling this report we have not necessarily followed the order in which the evidence was submitted at the Inquiry.

J A Robb

7th January 2016.

J A Cargo

2. BACKGROUND TO THE INQUIRY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 Background to the Inquiry

The trans-European transport network is formed, in part, by the North-Sea Mediterranean Corridor which includes road links between Belfast, Dublin and Cork.

The development of the proposed Scheme has been co-financed by the European Union as a priority project on this Corridor to upgrade and improve connections from Britain, Ireland and Continental Europe,.

The City of Belfast is Northern Ireland's major transport hub and the main transport gateway to the rest of the United Kingdom and Europe. It is the focal point for a number of the Key Transport Corridors that collectively form part of the strategic road network managed by Transport NI. The strategic road network, along with the rail network, forms Northern Ireland's overall Regional Strategic Transport Network.

The Key Transport Corridors within Northern Ireland provide connection to other major European cities through the region's gateways. These gateways include Northern Ireland's airports and sea ports. The Eastern Seaboard Key Transport Corridor runs through Belfast and provides connections to the regional gateways of the Port of Belfast and George Best Belfast City Airport. Within the Belfast Metropolitan Area, the corridor comprises the M1, Westlink and M2.

The existing York Street junction is a node on the Eastern Seaboard Key Transport Corridor, located to the north of Belfast City Centre. At this node, strategic traffic movements interact with strategic traffic movements to and from the M3 and local traffic movements into and out of Belfast City Centre.

The capacity of the existing York Street junction is limited by both the magnitude of competing traffic flows and the various physical constraints at the location. These physical constraints include adjacent residential housing, commercial, retail and industrial properties, elevated rail infrastructure carried on the Dargan Bridge and the capacity of the existing roads.

The lack of capacity at the junction causes undue congestion and thereby delays for freight, public transport and private vehicles. It is therefore considered a bottleneck on the strategic road network, in accordance with the definition established by Northern Ireland's Regional Transportation Strategy.

Improvements to the strategic road network have been established in Northern Ireland policy through the publication of the Regional Development Strategy and the Regional Transportation Strategy. These strategies are implemented through the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, the Sub-Regional Transport Plan, and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

These regional strategies, together with the local policy publications, were based on the Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies, an objective-led approach to seeking solutions to transport-related problems and were prepared in consultation with and informed by stakeholders.

2.2 Description of the Site

The proposed York Street Interchange is centred on the interface between North Belfast, the northern fringe of Belfast City Centre and Belfast Harbour (Sailortown/Greater Clarendon) and is dominated by Dargan Bridge and the main arterial road routes that link the south of the City (Westlink), the east (M3 Lagan Bridge), the north (M2) and Belfast City Centre with North Belfast (York Street). The major strategic road junction and railway (developed between the mid 1960s and 1990s) separates the harbour area to the east, commercial and residential properties to the north and west, and the City Centre to the south from each other.

Located at the southern end of one of the main arterial routes (York Street/York Road/Shore Road) in Belfast, the area in the vicinity of the existing junction generally forms a degraded urban landscape, however the area has attributes and features reflective of the ever-changing face of Belfast, from the Industrial Revolution through to contemporary 21st Century developments.

In the vicinity of the existing junction, the main characteristic is the legacy of 20 Century transport planning which has changed the urban fabric, to achieve not only easier traffic movements around the periphery of the City, but to essentially act as one of the primary road transportation hubs for the Province, providing a northern gateway to the City.

The large-scale physical infrastructure features, such as embankments and bridges have caused a certain degree of severance. Also part of this transportation legacy is the Westlink, which due to its at-grade intersection with York Street between the M2 and M3, disrupts the continuity of this arterial route.

Much of the land in the vicinity of the existing junction is either brownfield or currently in use as surface level car parking. Whilst this land has been developed in the past, very little non-infrastructure built development exists, other than a small vehicle servicing facility on Shipbuoy Street.

3. THE DEPARTMENT'S CASE

3.1 BACKGROUND TO THE SCHEME AND STATUTORY PROCEDURES

The following submission was made on the morning of Day 1 of the Inquiry by Mr Spiers - The York Street Interchange Project Sponsor.

'Introduction

Personal Details

My name is Roy Spiers. I am the Strategic Road Improvement Manager for Eastern Division of TransportNI. I have a BSc Honours Degree in Civil Engineering, I am a Chartered Engineer and a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers. I hold a certificate of Project Sponsorship awarded by the Civil Service College and a Diploma in Management Practice from the University of Ulster. I have over 40 years' experience in various aspects of road design and maintenance with TransportNI (formerly Roads Service) and have led the Strategic Road Improvement Team in Eastern Division in the design and delivery of strategic road schemes for the past 13 years with responsibility for the development and implementation of a number of major road schemes.

Project Role

I am the Project Sponsor for the York Street Interchange with responsibility for development and delivery of the Proposed Scheme.

I have been involved with this strategic road improvement since its inception in 2005 and have managed its design development, consultations and progression through the statutory processes in accordance with the relevant procedures and business targets.

I manage the consultancy team from URS who provide the technical expertise in the design of the project. URS, now part of AECOM, is one of the world's leading engineering consultancy firms. For the purposes of this Proof of Evidence, references to URS include reference to its former legacy companies, including Scott Wilson.

My role at this Public Inquiry is principally to provide evidence on the background of the Proposed Scheme, the policy context in which it is being progressed and the statutory procedures.

THE EXISTING SITUATION

The existing York Street junction is located on the Eastern Seaboard Corridor which is a part of the North Sea-Mediterranean Corridor, a Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) route which runs down the eastern side of Ireland linking the ports of Belfast, Dublin and Cork. The TEN-T network is illustrated in Figure 1.

The existing junction links together the three busiest roads in Northern Ireland and provides access to the Port of Belfast from the Strategic Road Network and is the main access to Belfast from the north.

The current arrangement consists of a signalised gyratory "box" system with traffic signals at each corner, serving over 100,000 traffic movements per day. It is a source of traffic congestion and requires careful traffic management, particularly in peak periods, to ensure that the gyratory system does not become blocked as this would result in significant traffic delays.

The existing junction is therefore considered a "bottleneck" on the Strategic Road Network in accordance with the definition established by the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, i.e.:

“...where localised restrictions cause undue congestion and thereby delay for freight, public transport and cars.”

York Street also provides a pedestrian route linking the railway station at York Street and the residential area of North Belfast to the City Centre. This can be a particularly difficult and intimidating route for pedestrians as they have to cross six lanes of traffic at two locations on their route into the city. There are no cycling facilities at present through the junction.

The traffic route from the M2 to the Westlink is particularly affected by delays as these vehicles are required to pass through three sets of traffic signals to make this connection.

Local traffic movements on the adjacent streets are also difficult as drivers seek alternative access and egress to and from the City Centre.

The area is bounded by a local residential area in Little Georges Street on the northern side of the Westlink and by the lands owned by the Harbour Commissioners along Corporation Street. The planned opening of the University of Ulster development in 2017 along with other planned proposals has been considered on the basis of information made available as part of their respective planning applications.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY / STRATEGIES

The programme to improve transport links in Northern Ireland has been developed and is based on a series of key documents which include:

- The 1998 White Paper ‘A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone’;
- ‘Moving Forward: The Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement’ published in 1998;
- ‘Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 - Shaping our Future’ published in 2002;
- ‘Regional Development Strategy 2035 – Building a Better Future’ published in 2012;
- ‘Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012’ published in 2012;
- ‘Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation’, published in 2012;
- ‘Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015’ published in 2005;
- ‘Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015’ (BMTP) published in 2004;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018;
- Investment Delivery Plan for Roads;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021; and
- Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015.

The Regional Transport Strategy recognises the importance of removing bottlenecks on the Key Transport Corridors. The bottleneck at the York Street Interchange is identified in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and the Consultation Document *“Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015”* published in 2006.

The proposed improvement was developed following the Public Inquiry into the M1/Westlink Improvements that was held in 2002 and the completion of the statutory Orders for the improvement of the M2. It was clearly recognised that both these

schemes would deliver traffic quicker to the York Street junction, which even at that time was considered to be operating in excess of its capacity.

In 2005 a feasibility assessment of options to alleviate traffic congestion at the existing York Street junction was undertaken by URS.

Several primary investment options were considered to improve conditions at York Street. These options ranged from traffic management options, which could have been implemented in the short term to provide immediate improvements, to full grade-separation options that removed the conflicts between main traffic movements implemented in the longer term.

This resulted in two reports being produced in 2005, the Traffic Management Options Report and the York Street Interchange Preliminary Appraisal Report.

The Traffic Management Options Report considered traffic management solutions for the junction. The options presented were not considered to provide an acceptable solution in terms of operational effectiveness and safety and therefore were not taken forward.

The York Street Interchange Preliminary Appraisal Report considered the provision of grade separation with direct links between the three main routes. This was confirmed as feasible and this option was presented to the then Roads Service Board in 2006 prior to the scheme being admitted to the TransportNI Forward Planning Schedule.

A short term improvement to widen the Westlink to provide a dedicated off slip to York Road was implemented and completed in 2009.

SCHEME DEVELOPMENT, STATUTORY PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In March 2008 I was appointed as Project Sponsor and managed the appointment of URS to undertake the scheme development in accordance with the TransportNI procedures as set out in its Policy and Procedure Guide RSPPG E030 entitled "*Major Works Schemes – Inception to Construction*" (DRD-YSI-2-01) and the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

A Preliminary Options Report which summarises the outcome of a DMRB Stage 1 Scheme Assessment was completed in March 2009. This document considered six options and recommended that four of these be taken forward for more detailed assessment at the next stage, based around the principle of two options with largely elevated links and two links with mainly depressed links. Based on this report the scheme was formally approved by the Investment Decision Maker (IDM) in the form of the then Roads Service Board for inclusion in the Preparation Pool, which is a programme of high priority schemes that TransportNI is committed to progressing through the Statutory Procedures of Environmental Statement, Direction Order and Vesting Order. This is termed Approval Gateway 0 in RSPPG E030.

Following Approval Gateway 0, a DMRB Stage 2 Scheme Assessment was commenced on the scheme. As part of this process a non-statutory public consultation exercise was completed in June 2011, to invite comments from the public on the four options being considered. The findings from this consultation exercise were one of many factors taken into consideration at the end of the assessment process, where a single preferred option was identified. The findings from the Stage 2 Scheme Assessment and the reasons for the selection of the single preferred option are reported in the summary Preferred Options Report which was prepared and submitted to the IDM. Formal approval was granted to progress development of the preferred option and to start work on the statutory procedures in October 2012. This is termed Approval Gateway 1 in RSPPG E030.

The preferred option, now termed the Proposed Scheme, was then further developed to complete a full Environmental Assessment examining the impacts of the Proposed Scheme under a range of headings. This assessment detailed the factors that would be put in place to mitigate the impact of the proposed changes and detailed the land that would be required for the Proposed Scheme.

The statutory changes to the road network, in terms of designation of the roads, were also determined in the Designation Order, with the Vesting Order prepared to reflect and enable the necessary purchase of lands.

The announcement of the proposals for the statutory Orders was made on 27th January 2015 by the Minister for Regional Development.

The documents published for statutory public consultation on 28th January and 4th February 2015 included:

- a draft Direction Order (DRD-YSI-4-02);
- a draft Vesting Order (DRD-YSI-4-03); and
- an Environmental Statement (DRD-YSI-4-02).

The documents were made available at a Public Exhibition held on 9th and 10th February 2015 at the Ramada Encore Hotel, Talbot Street, Belfast. Members of the team were available at the exhibition to explain the details of the Proposed Scheme as required. A presentation of the Proposed Scheme was also made to the Committee for Regional Development on 25th February 2015.

A total of 53 responses were received by TransportNI prior to the closing date and a further 6 received after the closing date of 10th March 2015. The subsequent public consultation report (DRD-YSI-3-14) summarises the objections as 33 objections to the Proposed Scheme which can be broken down as:

- 4 objections on the basis of cost and that there are other higher priority schemes on the A6 and A5;
- 20 objections on the basis of insufficient provision for non-motorised users and cyclists in particular;
- 3 objections (including petitions signed by 26 people) about the impact of the proposals on the local community and residents of Little Georges Street and Molyneaux Street;
- 3 objections by parties affected by the draft Vesting Order;
- 2 objections relating to the development of the Proposed Scheme; and
- 1 objection relating to the impact of construction.

There were 9 comments in favour of the Proposed Scheme and 17 comments that did not express a view either in favour or against.

Throughout the process, there have been both statutory and non-statutory public consultation periods as highlighted in the evidence above. In addition to these processes there have been many meetings with interested parties and key stakeholders to allow TransportNI to incorporate their requirements and possible mitigation measures during the development of project. Some of these meetings have taken place after the formal objections have been lodged. We will continue to work with identified stakeholders up to and throughout the Public Inquiry.

On consideration of the responses submitted to TransportNI and because of the high profile nature of the Proposed Scheme the Minister for Regional Development announced on 25th March 2015 his decision to hold a Public Inquiry.

PUBLIC INQUIRY

TransportNI has appointed Mr Jim Robb as the Inspector to the Public Inquiry, with Mr Jack Cargo appointed as Assistant Inspector. Formal notice of the intention to hold a Public Inquiry has been published in accordance with TransportNI procedures.

Transport NI has prepared responses to the objections that have been lodged and exchanged this information with the objectors.

THE DEPARTMENT'S CONSIDERATION

The existing York Street junction which links three of the busiest roads in Northern Ireland by means of a signalised gyratory system has for some time been identified as a bottleneck on the strategic road network. The need for improvement has been identified in key strategy documents such as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

The appraisal of proposals for improvement are assessed against the Government's five criteria of Environment, Safety, Economy, Accessibility and Integration and also against the scheme specific objectives:

- to remove a bottleneck on the strategic road network;
- to deliver an affordable solution to reduce congestion on the strategic road network;
- to improve reliability of strategic journey times for the travelling public;
- to improve access to the regional gateways from the Eastern Seaboard Key Transport Corridor;
- to maintain access to existing properties, community facilities and commercial interests;
- to maintain access for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- to improve separation between strategic and local traffic.

TransportNI has considered the options available and concluded that the proposal to directly link the three main roads will greatly improve conditions for strategic and local traffic, reduce severance between North Belfast and the City Centre and substantially improve facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME

The Proposed Scheme has regard to the significant constraints that are associated with improving the road network within a very tightly constrained urban area. It provides direct links for the following traffic movements:

- Westlink to M2: Two traffic lanes which take the road under the new York Street Bridge and threads between the supports of the Dargan Bridge before rising to join the M2;
- M2 to Westlink: Two traffic lanes which run over a new bridge at Dock Street before descending sharply to below ground level to pass under the Westlink to M3 link, the Lagan and Dargan bridges and then under the new York Street bridge to join the Westlink;
- Westlink to M3: A single traffic lane which runs under the new York Street Bridge and continues at ground level under the Dargan and Lagan Bridges, over the M2 to the Westlink connection before rising to join the M3;
- M3 to Westlink: This single lane link diverges off from the M3 and threads between the piers of the Dargan Bridge below ground level and then under the new York Street Bridge before rising to join the Westlink. This link also

accommodates a diverge off to the City Centre (Nelson Street) and Great Georges Street;

- Dock Street to M3: A single lane on slip from Dock Street which connects to the Westlink to M3 link before rising to join the M3. This incorporates a short length of access road to provide access to land that will be available for development post completion;
- York Street: This will be carried over the Westlink on two new bridges. It will provide two North bound traffic lanes to York Street and north of the city, two traffic lanes towards the M2, a single city bound bus/cycle lane, a north bound cycle lane and footways on either side of the carriageway;
- Westlink to York Street and Docks: A new single lane slip road connecting to York Street with traffic lights will be provided; and
- Docks to Westlink: A new access will be created at Duncrue Street which connects to the M2 before the new bridge at Dock Street.

In order to future proof the opportunity to upgrade the Dargan Bridge to accommodate future dualling the foundations of the piers supporting this bridge will, as a minimum, be upgraded together with the piers affected.

The very tight configuration and the vertical and horizontal constraints mean that there will be a series of Departures from Standard associated with the design. The identified Departures from Standard have been submitted and are awaiting final approval from the Director of Engineering of TransportNI.

Speed limits of 40mph will be applied on all interchange links between the Westlink, M2 and M3 within the junction with the exception of the current M2 to M3 road which is currently 50mph. The speed limits on associated slip roads to and from the new interchange links will generally be 40mph, with the exception of the York Street to M2 slip road, which will be subject to a speed limit of 50mph.

The opportunity will be taken to change the current road drainage outfall, which currently discharges to the sewage system and provide a separate pumped outfall to the River Lagan.

The aesthetics of the scheme will address issues of user friendliness and marking the junction as a major gateway to the city. This has been developed under the guidance of a group of key stakeholders as a Strategic Advisory Group and is reported in document referenced DRD-YSI-3-15.

The option appraisal assessment will be set out in the evidence to be given by Mr Michael Megarry of URS. He will be supported by the appointed buildability Mr John Fraser of Gareloch Consult Ltd.

The economic case and traffic assessment will be addressed in the evidence to be given by Mr Russell Bissland of URS.

The environmental assessment and the proposed mitigation will be described in the evidence given Mr Gareth Coughlin. He will be assisted by the specialists in regard to air quality by Mr Garry Gray, noise by Mr Alf Maneylaws, landscape and visual by Mr Paul Tully and in regard to daylight assessment by Dr Foroutan Parand.

CONCLUSIONS

TransportNI has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the options for the proposed improvement including a full environmental impact assessment of the Proposed Scheme and where appropriate proposed mitigation measures.

TransportNI has concluded that the Proposed Scheme represents good value for money. The Proposed Scheme has a TransportNI approved estimate range of between £125 million and £165 million. Over the 60 year assessment period it

provides a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.33 (based on National Road Traffic Forecast Central Growth factors).

The scheme will enhance the connection between North Belfast and the City Centre and will significantly improve access for pedestrian, cyclist and public transport. In particular the connection between the Yorkgate railway station and the city.

TransportNI has approved a procurement strategy which will to some extent be running in parallel with the completion of the statutory procedures and the consideration of the proposal by the Inspector to the Public Inquiry. This procurement programme is necessary to ensure that scheme delivery is within a potential EU funding programme. It is deemed sufficiently flexible to accommodate the outcomes of the Public Inquiry. It includes a pre-qualification process for prospective tenderers that will start immediately after the Public Inquiry and result in publication of a shortlist for tender in February 2016.'

3.2 THE DEPARTMENT'S CASE - SCHEME DEVELOPMENT UP TO THE PUBLICATION OF DRAFT ORDERS

The following submission made on the morning of Day 1 of the Inquiry by Mr Megarry.

'INTRODUCTION

My name is Michael Megarry and I am an Associate with URS, Consulting Engineers. I have a BEng (Hons) degree in Civil Engineering. I am a Chartered Engineer (CEng) and a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers (MICE).

URS was acquired by AECOM in October, 2014. Together AECOM and URS are one of the world's premier, fully integrated infrastructure and support services firms.

Any references I make to URS include references to its former legacy companies, including Scott Wilson.

In April 2009 I was appointed URS' Project Manager for the development of the Proposed Scheme. I am responsible for the general progression of the project, overseeing the roads design input and co-ordinating the other design teams, who specialise in areas such as structural and geotechnical design, environmental assessment and traffic and economic analysis.

TransportNI has outlined its strategy for the Proposed Scheme and the brief under which URS was initially appointed in June 2008 to carry out the assessment work on this project. Under its brief URS has completed the following tasks:

- Stage 1 Scheme Assessment in accordance with the procedures in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB);
- Stage 2 Scheme Assessment in accordance with the procedures in the DMRB;
- Stage 3 Scheme Assessment in accordance with the procedures in the DMRB; and
- preparation of Environmental Statement, Designation Order, Vesting Order, and Economic Appraisal documents in support of the statutory procedures.

SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

A significant volume of detailed information has been prepared during the development of the Proposed Scheme, which has been published in report form or has been summarised for Public Exhibition at various stages.

In addition to the submission and attendance at this Inquiry, the Department is represented by other experts who are available to provide clarification on elements of the scheme, such as Environment, Traffic & Economics, Noise, Air Quality and Ecology.

This submission will provide a summary of the technical aspects of the road scheme presented in the draft statutory orders. It will focus on the decisions made at the corridor and route selection stages and provide a summary of the Proposed Scheme.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Topography

The natural topography within the study area is relatively flat, given its proximity to sea level, with typical levels at York Street junction being approximately 2.0 metres Above Ordnance Datum (mAOD).

The M2 is elevated to a level of approximately 10.0mAOD, approximately 8.0m above the surrounding streets from Dock Street underbridge and increases to tie-in

with the Lagan Bridge and Dargan Bridge, which are elevated to approximately 12.0mAOD. Within the study area, the M3 is supported on the Lagan Bridge.

The Westlink is located at the west of the study area in a depressed section at Clifton Street, approximately 7m below the surrounding streets. The carriageway rises out of this cutting and approaches the existing York Street junction on an embankment falling from approximately 9.0mAOD at North Queen Street underbridge to meet the typical street level of 2.0mAOD at the York Street junction.

The Lagan Bridge was constructed between 1991 and 1994 as part of the Cross-Harbour Links contract. The main bridge comprises a viaduct structure with associated ramp structures which cross over numerous city streets and the River Lagan, supporting the M3 motorway. The bridge deck for the structure generally comprises of post-tensioned precast concrete box segments and is supported in turn on reinforced concrete piers.

The Dargan Bridge operated by Translink was constructed as part of the same works contract as the Lagan Bridge and comprises a viaduct structure which crosses over both city streets and the River Lagan. The bridge supports a single track railway line with passing points, opening to twin tracks on the main river span. The bridge is of similar construction to the Lagan Bridge, with the deck comprising of a series of post-tensioned precast concrete box segments supported on reinforced concrete piers and piled foundations.

Ground Conditions

The information on the ground conditions on the site was primarily obtained from the ground investigation conducted in 2013 by Causeway Geotech Ltd.

Hydrology and Drainage

The low lying nature of the area and its close proximity to a tidal section of the River Lagan and Belfast Harbour has significantly influenced the development of drainage infrastructure within the study area over the years.

Information relating to the existing drainage network in the area has been received from Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Rivers Agency and NI Water.

Public Utilities

It has been established that utility infrastructure in the area is owned and maintained by a variety of utility companies e.g. gas, electricity, potable water, storm water, foul sewers, and telecommunications traverse the study area forming potential constraints upon any improvements scheme.

Land Ownership

Land Registry information available from Land and Property Services has informed the draft vesting schedule.

Site Constraints

As would be expected for an urban area, the site is bounded on all sides by existing built infrastructure.

The nature of these conditions is such that they form constraints. Options to provide an interchange at the location must therefore be fitted around these constraints, or seek to remove them entirely.

It should be recognised, however, that all constraints cannot be removed, for engineering, environmental or economic reasons. Where this is evident, compromises are required in the layout of the proposed interchange.

At the extent of the site of the Proposed Scheme, it will be necessary to tie back into the existing road network. The constraints of the existing road network create constraints on the provision within the future Proposed Scheme.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

2005 Feasibility Studies

Traffic Management Options Report

In 2005 a feasibility assessment of options to alleviate traffic congestion at the existing York Street junction was undertaken by URS.

To provide some measure of investment scale, the following cost thresholds were identified:

- low cost improvement options with a capital cost of up to approx. £0.5m;
- medium cost improvement options with a capital cost of up to approx. £3m; and
- high cost improvement options with a capital cost of up to approx. £10m.

A total of ten short, medium and long term options for the junction were identified. Of the ten options, one was identified as a sole long-term solution and subject to separate specific assessment.

The remaining nine options were identified as short and medium term traffic management options and assessed and reported upon in a summary Traffic Management Options Report dated June 2005.

Preliminary Appraisal Report

URS assessed the feasibility of a single long-term option to provide grade separation at the existing York Street junction in addition to several short and medium term options.

The single long term option comprised a grade separated interchange, similar to the Proposed Scheme.

The option was subject to an engineering assessment, to determine its feasibility within the site constraints. The findings from this assessment are reported in the summary Preliminary Appraisal Report dated December 2005.

The report concluded that the proposed road layout should be subjected to further scrutiny as part of a DMRB Scheme Assessment process to determine the scheme's engineering, environmental and traffic and economic benefits and disbenefits.

The recommendations of both reports were accepted by Transport NI, with URS subsequently commissioned in 2008 to commence the Scheme Assessment process of the long-term interchange option.

Scheme Assessment Reports -

Process

The assessment of Strategic Road Improvements is outlined in DMRB Technical Standard TD 37/93 entitled "*Scheme Assessment Reporting*" and is defined as a three-stage process.

The level of detail and scope of the assessment at each stage are appropriate to the type of decision that can reasonably be taken at that time.

Stage 1 Scheme Assessment

A Stage 1 Scheme Assessment requires the identification of the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages, disadvantages and constraints

associated with broadly defined improvement strategies. This concludes in the selection of a number of potential routes or scheme options.

Six preliminary options were identified that comprised elevated, depressed and combined corridors and these were subject to separate engineering, environmental, traffic and economic assessments.

As part of the completed environmental assessment, consultations were undertaken with an identified list of key stakeholders to the project in line with a Communications Plan developed for the scheme and approved by TransportNI.

In March 2009, URS completed its Stage 1 Scheme Assessment with the findings reported in the Preliminary Options Report of March 2009.

The recommendations of the report were endorsed by the TransportNI Board at its meeting of 26th March 2009.

Stage 2 Scheme Assessment

In accordance with the DMRB, a Stage 2 Scheme Assessment requires the identification of the factors to be taken into account in choosing alternative routes or improvement schemes and to identify the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages and constraints associated with those routes or schemes. This concludes in the selection of a preferred option.

Further to the recommendations arising from the Stage 1 Scheme Assessment, four of the six preliminary options were shortlisted for further assessment. The engineering designs of the options were developed in more detail through consultations with various statutory and non-statutory bodies.

The developed four options, termed Options A, B, C and D, proposed the introduction of grade separation at the existing junction using various alignments

Consultation formed an important part of the Stage 2 Scheme Assessment process. Consultations were undertaken with an identified list of key stakeholders for the project in line with a consultations strategy developed as part of a Communications Plan approved by TransportNI.

In line with the consultation strategy, a formal public consultation event was held in June 2011 to allow members of the public to view and comment upon the proposals. A summary public consultation report was subsequently prepared and published.

Following their identification and refinement, the options were subject to separate engineering, environmental, traffic and economic assessments in accordance with the requirements of the DMRB. The findings from these assessments were reported in the Preferred Options Report of October 2012.

Taking into consideration its overall performance across the scheme objectives and the views raised in response to the public consultation, it was recommended that Option C be selected as the preferred option for the scheme and further developed in line with the engineering standards set out in the DMRB to a level sufficient for a Stage 3 Scheme Assessment prior to the commencement of statutory procedures.

The selection of Option C as the preferred option was endorsed by the TransportNI Board at its meeting of 26th October 2012 and subsequently announced on 6th December 2012 by the Minister for Regional Development.

Stage 3 Scheme Assessment

In accordance with the DMRB, a Stage 3 Scheme Assessment requires clear identification of the advantages and disadvantages, environmental, engineering, economic and traffic terms of the preferred option.

The Stage 3 Scheme Assessment report, termed the Proposed Scheme Report, comprised two distinct sections:

- Part 1: Environmental Statement; and
- Part 2: Engineering, Traffic and Economic Assessment Report.

The Proof of Evidence prepared and submitted separately by Mr. Gareth Coughlin, summarises the findings from the Environmental Statement.

The development of the scheme, now termed the Proposed Scheme, at the Stage 3 Scheme Assessment was based, in part, on the recommendations arising from the Stage 2 Scheme Assessment process. In addition to the COBA and QUADRO models prepared for the Stage 3 traffic and economic assessment, various detailed traffic models were created to assist in the development of the Proposed Scheme.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED SCHEME

Road Links

The Proposed Scheme would provide a fully grade separated interchange to replace the existing signalised gyratory junction. Interchange links between the Westlink, the M2 and the M3 motorways would be provided in underpasses aligned underneath new bridge structures at York Street and under the existing Dargan and Lagan Bridges.

Two lanes would be provided on new interchange links between the Westlink and M2, with one lane provided on the interchange links between the Westlink and M3. Hard shoulders have been provided within the various underpass where space allows.

The existing North Queen Street and Dock Street Bridges and the Whitla Street subway structure would be widened as necessary to accommodate the new road layout, with another new overbridge structure proposed at Dock Street. Retaining walls and piled embankments will be provided as required to support the new road alignments.

To facilitate the online widening of the Westlink between North Queen Street and York Street, the existing embankment requires modification. To avoid works to replace the existing retaining walls at Little Georges Street and Great Georges Street, a strengthened earthwork is proposed on the northern side of the link between North Queen Street bridge and York Street for a distance of approximately 100m, with a steepened side slope. Construction of these strengthened earthworks would require suitable working platforms for piling operations and this would, in turn, require temporary removal of a significant portion of the existing embankment.

Connections from the local street network to the new interchange links would be provided at Clifton Street, York Street, Dock Street and Duncrue Street in the form of on-slips. Connections from the strategic road network to the local street network would be provided in the form of off-slips from the interchange links at Clifton Street, York Street and Nelson Street. The existing north facing on and off slip roads at Clifton Street would remain open within the proposed road layout. New weaving sections are created between Clifton Street and York Street on both carriageways of the Westlink that provide the Absolute Minimum weaving lengths required under the DMRB.

It should be noted that the proposed changes to York Street would reintroduce two-way running of a form to provide a new bus/cycle lane in the southbound direction. The southbound bus/cycle lane would be provided from the new signalised junction

at the connection with the York Street to M2 on-slip and would terminate at the Inner Ring. Provision of the southbound bus/cycle lane would require an associated reduction in the northbound lane provision, with three lanes proposed, opening to four at the junction with the M3 off-slip to Great Georges Street. In addition, a northbound cycle lane of 1.5m in width would be included, with footways widened to 3m where possible within the existing building constraints and reflected in the proposed cross-section on the new York Street bridges.

Following the completion of the statutory public consultation, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for non-motorised users on York Street. A revised layout has been prepared and submitted to this Inquiry for consideration.

On the south-east wing wall of the North Queen Street bridge, it is noted that there are several memorials associated with the McGurk's bar bombing. All such memorials would require removal as part of the works, this will be undertaken in consultation with victims' representatives and TransportNI.

The existing private access onto York Street for Galway House would be removed as part of the scheme to accommodate the new York Street to M2 on-slip. To maintain access to the current development and indeed, any future development within the overall business park, a new signalised access is proposed at the north-west corner of the existing car park to Galway House.

Design Speeds and Speed Limits

Design Speeds of 70A kph will be generally applied to the interchange links between the Westlink, M2 and M3. Associated slip roads will generally have a Design Speed of 60B kph, with the exception of the York Street to M2 slip road, which will have a slightly higher Design Speed of 70A kph. The various surface streets will have Design Speeds of 60B kph.

Owing to the constraints on the horizontal and vertical geometries of the various links within the interchange, it is proposed to implement a 40mph speed limit on the interchange links between Westlink, M2 and M3.

For the M2 to Westlink movement, the existing 50mph speed limit on the M3 motorway will be extended north along the southbound carriageway of the M2 from a position near the Duncrue Street off-slip.

The existing surface streets will retain their existing 30mph speed limits, with complementary speed limits on slip roads to and from the interchange links and mainlines as appropriate.

Traffic Classifications

With reference to the published draft Designation Order, it should be noted that:

- the roads described in Parts I and III of the Schedule shall be used only by traffic of Classes I and II as set out in Schedule 1 to the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993; and
- the roads described in Part II of the Schedule shall be used by traffic of all Classes as set out in said Schedule 1 except Classes VII and IX.

Site Clearance

The existing TransportNI section office and associated outbuildings at Corporation Street, in addition to the larger Driver and Vehicle Agency office building, would require demolition and removal. Other privately owned buildings scheduled for demolition would include the existing Focus Security Solutions premises at Corporation Street and Jack Kirk Garage at Shipbuoy Street and the single storey buildings located to the north of Philip House at York Street.

Drainage

The drainage solution developed for the Proposed Scheme seeks to maximise the drainage catchment area that would discharge storm water to a pumping station and which would then be conveyed onwards via a new pumping main arrangement to the outlet point near Gamble Street. An existing redundant combined sewer overflow culvert would be utilised to discharge through an outfall structure in the quay wall to Belfast Harbour.

Flood Risk Assessment

The existing York Street junction lies within the identified coastal floodplain of Belfast Lough, based on a 1 in 200 year (Q200) storm surge flooding event.

Following discussions with TransportNI, it was agreed that the Proposed Scheme should include sufficient flood protection measures to reduce the risk of coastal flooding to the various underpasses.

Following this agreement, a number of measures were developed to provide the Proposed Scheme with flood protection. These measures included the provision of permanent flood barriers, in the form of flood walls (or the extension of adjoining underpass walls upwards to the identified 3.9mAOD flood protection level).

Traffic Signals

The proposed scheme would include the provision of new traffic signal controlled junctions at the following locations:

- York Street/Great Georges Street;
- York Street/Westlink; and
- York Street/Cityside Retail Park/Galway House.

In addition, the following existing signal controlled junctions would require revision to reflect changes introduced by the Proposed Scheme:

- York Street/Great Patrick Street;
- York Street/Dock Street;
- Nelson Street/Great Patrick Street;
- Dock Street/Nelson Street; and
- Duncrue Street/M2 off-slip.

The existing controlled crossings at Whitla Street and Nelson Street would also require revision as appropriate to reflect changes introduced by the scheme.

Structures

The Proposed Scheme would require the construction of several significant structures, summarised below:

- four major underpasses, with retained heights of up to 10m;
- two twin span pre-stressed beam bridges, one highly skewed;
- a single span bridge supported on the walls of the largest underpass;
- a three span bridge carrying traffic over the Dock Street junction;
- two existing bridges to be widened, with parapet improvements, one adjacent to an existing railway structure;
- several retaining walls, several subject to collision loading and/or acting as flood protection walls;
- an extension to a pedestrian underpass;

- several services culverts;
- three overhead sign/signal gantries;
- structures associated with pumping stations required for scheme drainage;
- strengthening works to the substructure of Lagan Road Bridge; and
- strengthening works to the substructure of Dargan Rail Bridge.

Buildability Assessment

In order to demonstrate to TransportNI that the Proposed Scheme could be built within its constraints whilst maintaining an acceptable level of provision for traffic during construction, a buildability assessment was completed.

The buildability assessment completed by Mr John Fraser of Gareloch Consult Ltd was based on information provided by URS.

Mr. Fraser was satisfied that URS had developed an outline construction sequence which is feasible within its engineering constraints, as explained in more detail in his separate Proof of Evidence.

Departures from Standard

One hundred and ten Departures from Standard applications required to facilitate the road geometry within the Proposed Scheme have been approved by TransportNI.

Road Safety Audit

In accordance with the requirements of Standard HD 19 of the DMRB, highway improvement schemes are subject to a Road Safety Audit by an Audit Team during key stages in design and at the end of construction.

For the Proposed Scheme, a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit was commissioned by TransportNI in January 2014 at the time of completion of the preliminary design. The Audit Team comprised members of URS independent of the design team, with the associated Audit Report issued to TransportNI in May 2014.

Non-Motorised User Audits

The DMRB recognises the importance of the needs of Non-Motorised User (NMUs) in highway schemes, with Standard HD 42/05 requiring the completion of NMU Audits at key stages in their development. NMU Audits consider the implications of the scheme for NMU accessibility, safety, comfort and convenience. While road safety and personal safety of NMUs are considered, it does not duplicate the separate independent Road Safety Audit process.

For the Proposed Scheme, a NMU Context Report was prepared in October 2012 ahead of the commencement of preliminary design.

Following completion of the preliminary design, a Preliminary Design NMU Audit was completed with the findings presented in the summary NMU Audit Report of October 2013, ahead of the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit in January 2014.

Strategic Advisory Group

During the Stage 3 Scheme Assessment process, a Strategic Advisory Group was established to address concerns relayed by consultees over the integration of the scheme with its urban setting and planning context.

Traffic and Economic Assessment

The results from the completed traffic and economic assessment of the scheme are summarised separately in the Proof of Evidence prepared by my colleague, Mr. Russell Bissland of URS.

CONCLUSIONS

The Proposed Scheme was developed up to publication of draft Orders in accordance with the DMRB and the requirements of TransportNI, resulting in a scheme which:

- provides a solution to the bottleneck of the existing York Street junction on the Strategic Road Network;
- provides new uninterrupted road links between the strategic routes of the Westlink, the M2 motorway and the M3 motorway;
- maintain connections to and from the strategic road network for the communities of North Belfast via slip roads at Clifton Street, York Street and Duncrue Street;
- improves the road user experience on York Street, through the resultant reduction in road traffic volumes and the provision of additional cycling and bus priority infrastructure;
- improves connections to and from the Port of Belfast and the other regional gateways;
- has been robustly assessed for its engineering, traffic and economic benefits at several major hold points over the course of its design development;
- has minimal loss of private property;
- has been assessed to be buildable within its constraints whilst maintaining movements for strategic road traffic;
- would provide significant positive economic returns, with a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.33; and
- provides significant improvements in journey times for road users.'

3.3 THE DEPARTMENT'S CASE - TRAFFIC AND ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

The following submission was made on the morning of Day 1 of the Inquiry by Mr Bissland

'INTRODUCTION

My name is Russell Bissland. I am a Chartered Civil Engineer with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. I have been a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers since 1988 and a member of the Institution of Highways and Transportation since 1991.

I have more than 38 years' experience in civil engineering projects.

I am presently employed by Aecom (formerly URS) as a Technical Director based in the Glasgow office.

I am responsible for the traffic and economic assessment of major road improvement schemes throughout Scotland, Northern Ireland and the north of England. In Northern Ireland I have been responsible for the appraisal of road improvement schemes in Armagh, Enniskillen and Omagh. I have also been responsible for the traffic and economic assessment of major road improvement schemes including the A8 Belfast to Larne Improvement, the M2 Motorway Widening, the A1 Beech Hill to Cloghogue Dualling, the A6 Castledawson to Randalstown Dualling, the A6 Londonderry to Claudy Dualling and the A24 Ballynahinch Bypass.

The scope of my evidence concerns the Stage 3 Traffic and Economic Assessment Report for the Proposed Scheme.

The primary objective of the Stage 3 Traffic and Economic Assessment Report is to describe existing traffic conditions in the York Street area, to outline the indicative costs, risks and optimism bias associated with the Proposed Scheme and to describe the work undertaken to develop the various computer models. The report also considers future traffic conditions over the economic life of the Proposed Scheme and presents the results of an operational and economic assessment of the Proposed Scheme. Given the uncertainty in predicting future traffic conditions, the results from a series of sensitivity tests have also been reported.

BACKGROUND AND REPORTING

The Proposed Scheme was identified in the Roads Service Consultation Document 'Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015', dated July 2006, as an additional scheme to be added to the programme subject to consultation.

Scheme Development and Reporting

The Stage 1 Scheme Assessment completed in March 2009 identified that the introduction of grade separation at the existing signalised junction would deliver positive benefit to cost ratios.

The options were subject to separate Stage 2 engineering, environmental, traffic and economic assessments in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The findings from these assessments were reported in the Preferred Options Report of October 2012.

Following the announcement of the Preferred Option, the layout of the scheme was further refined ahead of a Stage 3 Assessment in accordance with the requirements of the DMRB.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing York Street junction in the centre of Belfast is one of the most heavily trafficked junction arrangements in Northern Ireland.

Existing conditions in the York Street area are subject to significant congestion during periods of peak traffic demand due to the convergence of traffic from the Westlink, the M2 and M3 motorways and the local surface streets. This demand is controlled by a series of signalised junctions.

The general location of the existing York Street junction and the surrounding road network is shown in Figure 3.1. A more detailed location plan is shown in Figure 3.2.

TRAFFIC SURVEYS AND DATA COLLECTION

A programme of data collection surveys was undertaken in 2012 to assist in establishing traffic volumes, turning flows and vehicle proportions at key junctions in the York Street area.

A programme of Manual Classified Counts (MCCs) was carried out at twenty nine locations within the study area to define current traffic volumes and turning movements. Analysis of the observed counts indicates that more than 100,000 vehicles approach the junction in a typical 12-hour weekday.

A programme of Queue Surveys was undertaken at four locations within the study area to assist in assessing operating conditions around the York Street gyratory.

Six temporary Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs) were installed at key locations within the study area to define directional, hourly and daily variations in traffic flows over a 14 day period.

A survey of current journey times was also undertaken in the York Street area, including the Westlink and the M2 and the M3 motorways, to assist in defining current operating conditions within the corridor. The surveys were carried out using two survey vehicles over two routes, namely the Red Route and the Blue Route, between 7am and 7pm to record variations in journey times throughout the day.

A total of 112 runs were carried out over the two days for the two routes.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME

The Proposed Scheme would provide uninterrupted links between the Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways. The existing link between the M2 and M3 motorways via the Lagan Bridge would be retained.

York Street would be realigned to provide a two-way running arrangement, with a single southbound bus lane in operation between the York Street / M2 motorway junction and Great Patrick Street.

Nelson Street between Dock Street and Great George's Street would be closed to traffic to accommodate the new links to and from the M3 motorway.

The Proposed Scheme would also provide a new link between Duncrue Street and the Westlink.

Costs, Risks and Optimism Bias

Cost estimates were prepared for the Proposed Scheme. These costs were used to define both the total construction cost and total land cost for the Proposed Scheme.

Consultations with both NI Water and Translink identified an opportunity to introduce storm water separation and to undertake strengthening works to several foundations of the Dargan Bridge as part of the Proposed Scheme.

As these works would be funded separately and there are no corresponding transport user benefits, the construction costs and benefits associated with these works have been excluded from the assessment.

The estimated cost of the Proposed Scheme in Q2 2013 prices, including an allowance of 16.5% for optimism bias, is £120.3m.

For the purpose of the economic appraisal, the cost profile is based on a three year construction period commencing in 2018 with the Proposed Scheme opening in 2021.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMPUTER MODELS

The assessment of the transport economic efficiency and road safety aspects of a proposed road improvement scheme requires the development and application of various computer models. In the case of the Proposed Scheme, this has involved the development of a COBA (Cost Benefit Analysis) model and a QUADRO (Queues and Delays at Roadworks) model. In addition to these models, various detailed traffic models were created to assist in the development of the Proposed Scheme.

The COBA Model

COBA is the standard computer model introduced in the 1970s to examine proposed investments in the trunk road network by comparing the costs of the road scheme with the associated road user benefits.

The Do-Minimum network is the base road network against which the Do-Something network is assessed.

The Do-Minimum COBA model was calibrated to reflect local conditions. To demonstrate that the model provides a reasonable representation of existing transport conditions in the area, the observed journey times and modelled times on the network derived from the COBA model were compared. The modelled Red Route time is within -4.5% of the observed time and the modelled Blue Route time is within +2.9% of the observed time, both of which are well within the 15% target defined in the DMRB.

The correlation between the observed times and the modelled times derived from the calibrated model confirms that the model provides a reasonable representation of actual operating conditions on the network.

The QUADRO Model

An assessment of the economic effects of the road user delays associated with the construction of the Proposed Scheme has been undertaken using the computer program QUADRO.

For the purpose of the QUADRO assessment, it has been assumed that traffic management would be in place for 24 hours per day, 7 days a week for the estimated 3 years construction programme between 2018 and 2021.

Within urban road networks in general and the York Street area in particular, multiple diversion routes are available within the local road network for road users affected by the Temporary Traffic Management arrangements. A maximum queue delay of 5 minutes has therefore been defined in the QUADRO models to reflect the time that road users are willing to be delayed due to the roadworks before selecting an alternative route.

FUTURE CONDITIONS

In accordance with standard procedures, it is necessary to establish changes in traffic demand over the full economic life of the scheme, which in the case of the Proposed Scheme extends to 60 years from the year of opening.

It is therefore considered that the most likely forecast of long term traffic growth within the study area for the assessment of the Proposed Scheme can best be defined by the application of national forecasts of traffic growth. The National Road Traffic Forecasts (NRTF) central growth projection has therefore been adopted to provide a reasonable estimate of long-term future traffic flows within the area over the 60-year economic assessment period.

Given the degree of uncertainty in predicting future traffic flows, the Proposed Scheme has also been tested considering NRTF low and high traffic growth projections.

A further test has been undertaken to consider the potential effects of releasing any suppressed demand when the Proposed Scheme opens. This high demand test is based on a high growth scenario with an additional 5% increase in traffic travelling on the strategic routes between the Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways.

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Traffic Flows

The principal operational effect of the Proposed Scheme is to provide improved transport links for strategic traffic movements by providing a grade-separated interchange that avoids the existing signalised junctions.

Examination of the traffic flows on the Do-Something network indicates that 83,400 vehicles per day would transfer on to the new strategic links between the Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways in the 2021 year of opening.

Journey Times

Savings in journey times are generally one of the most significant benefits resulting from the provision of a new transport improvement scheme.

The reductions in journey times for the strategic routes based on COBA Flow Group 4, which represents the peak period, in the 2021 year of opening are as follows:

- Westlink to M2 Motorway – 0.61 mins (19%) Saving;
- M2 Motorway to Westlink – 4.47 mins (56%) Saving;
- Westlink to M3 Motorway – 1.84 mins (53%) Saving; and
- M3 Motorway to Westlink – 2.50 mins (56%) Saving.

Network Capacity

Based on the information obtained from the COBA models, the over-capacity links and junctions in the Do-Minimum network under NRTF central traffic growth were identified.

By the 2021 year of opening, peak demand would exceed capacity on 13 links and 6 junctions, increasing to 18 links and 7 junctions in 2035.

Examination of the results for the Do-Something network indicates that peak traffic demand in 2021 would exceed capacity on 12 links and 3 junctions, increasing to 18 links and 4 junctions in 2035.

Road Safety

Given the inherent uncertainties in predicting future accident rates and casualty severities over the 60-year economic assessment period, the COBA assessment has been based on the application of default accident rates and costs. These have been applied to both the Do-Minimum and Do-Something networks to provide a reasonable measure of the relative change in road traffic accident characteristics associated with the two networks.

It should be noted that due to the characteristics of some of the new links relative to the existing links, the COBA model indicates that the various improvement options would lead to road safety disbenefits. For example, whereas the northbound approach to York Street on the existing Westlink currently has a 50 mph speed limit with a default accident rate of 0.174 Personal Injury Accidents / Million Vehicle Kilometres, the Do-Something option reduces the speed limit on this section of the road network to 40 mph with a default accident rate of 1.004 Personal Injury Accidents / Million Vehicle Kilometres. This results in a corresponding increase in accident numbers and associated disbenefits. This characteristic of the model should be taken into account when considering the road safety effects of the Proposed Scheme.

Based on the application of default accident rates and costs, the Proposed Scheme would lead to an additional 955 personal injury accidents over the 60-year period, which equates to an economic disbenefit of -£49.4m.

However, it is recognised that this increase in road safety costs is a characteristic of the default accident rates in the COBA model and it is expected that the Proposed Scheme would contribute positively to road safety.

ECONOMIC APPRAISAL

The economic results based on the combined COBA and QUADRO appraisals are summarised below, expressed in 2010 prices.

- Present Value of Benefits £174.57m
- Present Value of Costs £74.79m
- Net Present Value £99.78m
- Benefit to Cost Ratio 2.334

The principal benefits of the Proposed Scheme result from savings in transit time, which equate to £263.98m.

The results include road user delay costs of £38.26m derived from the QUADRO model.

The results from the combined COBA and QUADRO appraisal indicate that the Proposed Scheme would deliver a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334 and therefore represents good value for money.

SENSITIVITY TESTS

A series of sensitivity tests has been undertaken to examine the extent to which the combined results from the COBA and QUADRO economic appraisals vary under various scenarios. The results of the sensitivity tests to examine the effects of different traffic growth forecasts are summarised below.

- NRTF Low Traffic Growth BCR 1.563
- NRTF Central Traffic Growth BCR 2.334
- NRTF High Traffic Growth BCR 3.544

- NRTF High Traffic Demand BCR 2.289

The results from the combined COBA and QUADRO traffic forecast sensitivity tests indicate that the Proposed Scheme would deliver a Benefit to Cost Ratio range of 1.563 to 3.544.

To test the sensitivity of the QUADRO assessment to changes in maximum queue delay, the Proposed Scheme has been tested by increasing the maximum queue delay from 5 minutes to 10 minutes.

The results of this test indicate that the BCR would reduce from 2.334 to 2.170.

CONCLUSIONS

My evidence has described the extensive data collection surveys undertaken over a period of many years throughout the progressive DMRB Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3 Scheme Assessments to define baseline conditions and the level of congestion at the existing signalised junctions at the intersection of the Westlink, M2 and M3 motorways.

In addition to describing the development, validation and application of the various industry standard computer models, my evidence has presented the results of the operational and economic assessments of the Proposed Scheme and the results of the various sensitivity tests.

The results of the operational assessments indicate that the Proposed Scheme would reduce journey times in the York Street area.

The results of the economic assessments indicate that the Proposed Scheme represents good value for money with an overall Net Present Value of £99.78m and a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334 under the NRTF central traffic growth forecast scenario.'

The results of the various sensitivity tests indicate that the Proposed Scheme would generate a positive Net Present Value over a range of test scenarios where the overall benefits exceed the cost of the scheme.

Based on the above results, it is concluded that the Proposed Scheme would improve operating conditions in the York Street area and represents good value for money.'

3.4 THE DEPARTMENT'S CASE - ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The following submission was made on the morning of Day 1 of the Inquiry by Mr Coughlin.

'Introduction

My name is Gareth Coughlin, Associate and Environmental Scientist with URS, the consultants appointed to assist TransportNI Eastern Division's Strategic Road Improvement Team in delivering the Proposed Scheme. I hold a First Class Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in Environmental Science, and a Master of Philosophy degree, by research, in quarrying and its impacts on the environment. I am a Chartered Environmentalist, Chartered Water and Environmental Manager, Chartered Scientist, and Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Water & Environmental Management (CIWEM). I am also past Chairman of the Northern Ireland branch of CIWEM.

I am the Environmental Coordinator for this project, responsible for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Proposed Scheme, and subsequent preparation and delivery of the Environmental Statement, published in January 2015. I have been involved in the management and coordination of the EIA of the overall scheme since 2008.

Scope of Evidence

Mr Spiers has outlined the background to the Proposed Scheme and the Statutory Procedures, and Mr Megarry has addressed the scheme development, up to the publication of Draft Orders and has set the context for the current Environmental Statement. My evidence will therefore deal only with the January 2015 Environmental Statement.

Structure of the Environmental Statement

The Environmental Statement has been reported in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (DMRB) Section 11.2.6 and comprises three volumes; these are:

- Volume 1 Environmental Assessment – the main text of the document which includes separate Non-Technical Summary, separate Introduction (Part I), Environmental Assessment (Part II), Conclusions (Part III) and References and Glossary (Part IV);
- Volume 2 Appendices – relevant supplementary information associated with Volume 1; and
- Volume 3 Drawings – figures as referenced within the various chapters of Volume 1.

The Environmental Statement adopts the structure set out in the DMRB Volume 11: Environmental Assessment, which lists ten environmental topics as follows:

- Air Quality;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Ecology & Nature Conservation;
- Landscape & Visual Effects;
- Land Use;
- Noise & Vibration;
- Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians & Community Effects;
- Vehicle Travellers;

- Road Drainage & the Water Environment; and
- Geology & Soils.

The effects resulting from construction, and any associated disruption are assessed under these individual environmental topic headings. The effects on specific policies and plans are reported where they are most relevant (i.e. under Strategic Need for the Proposed Scheme and the individual environmental topic headings).

A number of Interim Advice Notes (IANs) have been issued by Highways Agency in relation to the DMRB environmental assessment techniques. Where applicable, the DMRB environmental assessment has been supplemented by or superseded using this guidance.

Separate Proofs of Evidence have been prepared in relation to Air Quality (Dr. Garry Gray), Landscape & Visual Effects (Mr. Paul Tully), and Noise & Vibration (Mr. Alf Maneylaws). Whilst my evidence provides a summary of these proofs, the specialists can be made available for responding to detailed queries on their respective topics throughout the course of the inquiry.

Legal basis for the Environmental Statement

The ES has been issued in accordance with the EIA Directive and required by Part V of The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 as substituted by The Roads (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 and amended by The Roads (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.

As per the requirements of The Roads (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999, the Environmental Statement contains the information referred to in Annex IV of the EIA Directive, which is relevant to the specific characteristics of the Proposed Scheme and to the environmental features likely to be affected.

Consultation

An integral element of the environmental assessment includes consultation with statutory authorities and other interested bodies to establish any relevant constraints or factors to be taken into account when considering the Proposed Scheme. All statutory consultations undertaken to date were in accordance with a Communications Plan, developed in line with TransportNI's brief for the Proposed Scheme and their '*Communications Guidelines for Major Works Projects*' document and '*Good Practice Communications Guide*'.

Summary

On the basis of comprehensive preliminary investigations and statutory and public consultations, the significant environmental effects have been identified. These effects have been investigated and reviewed, and are presented in the Environmental Statement, Volume 1, Chapters 8 through to 17.

It is important to emphasise that the process of interchange option selection has by its nature, resulted in reducing impacts for many of the aspects considered. Clearly, these benefits are not revisited in the Environmental Statement, which only reviews the Proposed Scheme. This should be borne in mind when reviewing the Environmental Statement.

The following sections (Sections 2 to 12) provide a very succinct summary of only the key findings of the environmental assessment. Reference should be made to the full suite of environmental supporting documents produced to date, not least of which is the Environmental Statement January 2015.

AIR QUALITY

Chapter 8 of the Environment Statement presented an assessment of the likely effects of the Proposed Scheme on Local air quality and Regional air quality. The assessment approach is consistent with current guidance set out in the DMRB, Advice Note HA207/07.

The Proposed Scheme construction works have the potential to generate emissions, of dust and fine particulate matter. However, with the proposed mitigation measures applied appropriately, the adverse effect of the works as a whole would be reduced to a level that can reasonably be considered to be acceptable. The contractor would prepare a management plan that details the measures that would be used to control emissions of particulate matter and this plan would be submitted to Belfast City Council for their approval.

The Proposed Scheme would not have a significant effect on regional air quality as the magnitude of predicted changes in regional air pollutant emissions are small. However, there would be minor effects on regional air quality with the operation of the Proposed Scheme, due to the increased flow of traffic and the additional road link length.

The likely change in long- and short-term air pollutant concentrations have been quantified using a dispersion model, that has been calibrated against measurement data for locations within the study area. It is predicted that there would be a minor adverse effect of the Proposed Scheme at a small number of properties within The Belfast Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) No.1 and at a small number of properties located alongside North Queen Street. This would be counter balanced by the magnitude of the reductions in annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide at other receptors in the Belfast AQMA No.1.

The Proposed Scheme would not prevent the successful implementation of strategies for the sustained achievement of air quality objectives in Belfast. On balance, it is considered that the Proposed Scheme has a Neutral effect with respect to air quality overall.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The assessment of cultural heritage within the study area reviewed the three subtopics of archaeological remains, historic buildings, and historic landscapes. In accordance with DMRB 11.3.2.3, a 'Detailed' Assessment was deemed the most appropriate level of assessment.

The assessment concluded that there would be no physical impact as a result of the Proposed Scheme on any buildings of historic interest (designated and non-designated assets), but there would be impacts on the setting of a number of these that are in close proximity; and a number of archaeological assets would be impacted. The Proposed Scheme design has avoided impacts where possible and minimised adverse effects, however, the overall significance of effect on the cultural heritage assets would be Slight Adverse. There would be no impact on high value archaeological assets.

ECOLOGY & NATURE CONSERVATION

The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of DMRB 11.3.4 and supplemented or supported by other relevant survey and assessment guidance.

Overall, the assessment concluded that the Proposed Scheme would have a relatively low effect on the ecological value and conservation status of the area, its habitats and its species. Typically, urban species adapted to live in such environments were found and as such, are not considered particularly sensitive.

Due to the proximity and hydrological link of the Proposed Scheme to the existing Belfast Lough and Belfast Lough Open Water Special Protection Areas, and Belfast Lough Ramsar site, a Habitats Regulations Assessment was undertaken in tandem with the ecological assessment. A Statement to Inform the Appropriate Assessment was prepared, and concluded that there would be no significant effect on the integrity of any designated Natura 2000 sites with implementation of the Proposed Scheme, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

The assessment was carried out in accordance with the Highways Agency Interim Advice Note (IAN) 135/10 '*Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment*', and supported by guidance from the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Second Edition*' (2002).

There are no significantly sensitive landscape features within the lands required for the Proposed Scheme. No Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Areas of High Scenic Quality would be affected. Clifton House and Grounds (a Local Landscape Policy Area, and Historic Park, Garden and Demesne) would be the closest landscape designated area to the Proposed Scheme and some of the elevated elements, such as highway lighting and signage, may add further uncharacteristic elements to its wider setting.

Considering the existing conditions of the site (comprising mostly commercial buildings, surface carparks, and road infrastructure), the Proposed Scheme would generally blend into the site context, albeit with appropriate mitigation.

Views from dwellings in proximity to the Proposed Scheme would change. The majority of potential receptors would experience a Neutral or Minor Adverse visual impact in Year 1. The mitigation measures would further reduce the visual impact, especially after Year 15 (15 years after opening), when proposed screen planting would have matured. A small number of receptors would still experience adverse visual effects which are regarded as significant, i.e. 'Large' or 'Very Large', in Year 15.

LAND USE

The assessment of impacts on land use was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of DMRB 11.3.6. The assessment covered the effects arising from direct and indirect impacts upon private property, private land, development land, and restoration proposals for abandoned waterways. The effects on agricultural land were scoped-out of the assessment due to the urban nature of the area.

The assessment concluded that a total of six properties (two government, three commercial and one community) would be demolished (including associated landtake). Four of these would be lost to accommodate permanent elements associated with the Proposed Scheme, and two properties would be lost as a result of phased construction works.

A total of thirteen plots would be subject to private land loss impacts in order to accommodate various permanent elements of the Proposed Scheme. Furthermore, it is expected that three plots would also be subject to private land loss impacts as a result of temporary works during the construction phase. For the majority of properties affected, the significance of effect would be Neutral as a result of either negligible losses or minimal disruption to continued usage of these lands. Nevertheless, adverse effects associated with private land loss would be experienced with this scheme, though offset to some degree by the opportunity to combine severed parcels of residual lands into larger plots and making these available for potential future development.

Only four planning applications would be lost in their entirety to accommodate the Proposed Scheme.

No areas of community land or BMAP designations, policies, proposals or zonings for development land would be adversely affected by the Proposed Scheme.

NOISE & VIBRATION

A noise and vibration assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the methodology for a 'Detailed' Assessment as described in the November 2011 version of DMRB 11.3.7 (HD 213/11 – Revision 1). The assessment covers both long-term noise and vibration impacts from operation of the Scheme, and temporary noise and vibration impacts from construction of the Scheme. This included a baseline noise survey.

For the operational assessment, road traffic noise levels have been calculated at all residential and sensitive non-residential properties within a 400-metre buffer around the Proposed Scheme, with and without the Scheme in operation.

For the operational vibration assessment, the calculated noise levels at all residential properties within 40 metres of the Proposed Scheme have been used to estimate the change in numbers of people affected by traffic vibration nuisance.

Temporary noise and vibration impacts resulting from the construction phase have been calculated at a representative set of receptors for a range of construction activities, employing the procedures in BS5228: 2014 Part 1: Noise, and Part 2: Vibration. The estimated noise and vibration levels have been assessed against the limits provided in Belfast City Council's Advice Note for construction and demolition sites.

Mitigation has been specified to reduce the operational noise impacts of the Proposed Scheme. This comprises the provision of two additional noise barriers along the northbound and southbound carriageways of the Westlink, and the provision of low noise surfacing on interchange links between the Westlink, M2 and M3, and the slip roads from these to the local road network.

A range of good site practices would be adopted in order to mitigate construction phase noise and vibration impacts. These would be presented in the Construction Environmental Management Plan.

With the specified mitigation, operational noise impacts resulting from the Proposed Scheme have been assessed as Negligible / Minor negative in the short-term and Negligible in the long-term. Operational vibration impacts have been assessed as Negligible.

With a robust mitigation strategy in place, and taking into consideration the short-term nature of some of the construction activities, the significance of construction noise effects has been assessed as Minor negative. The significance of construction vibration effects has been assessed as Negligible.

Overall, the significance of the noise and vibration effects of the Proposed Scheme has been assessed as Negligible.

PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS, EQUESTRIANS & COMMUNITY EFFECTS

The assessment of pedestrian, cyclist, equestrian and community effects was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of DMRB 11.3.8.

The assessment concluded that strategic and local traffic interaction would occur through a much improved highway environment. The flow of local traffic through the interchange would become more regulated and the safety of the highway environment would improve for the vehicle user. However, even though some roads would not be subject to physical alteration, they would be subject to traffic

redistributional effects as a result of proposed changes to other parts of the existing road network, altering routes taken to complete desired journeys.

Six community facilities would be lost in their entirety to accommodate the Proposed Scheme. A number of community facilities would also experience direct land loss or access impacts, however their continued usage during the operational phase is unlikely to be significantly affected.

The reduction in strategic traffic interaction, resultant freer flowing traffic conditions, and inclusion of a southbound bus lane on York Street would be of benefit to and help improve the quality of public transport services in delivering a modern, integrated transport system for the Belfast Metropolitan Area. However, a number of bus services utilising the wider road network, which although not directly affected by the Proposed Scheme, would be adversely affected by the traffic redistributional effects associated with changes to the existing road network.

In terms of amenity and relief from existing severance, the benefits associated with grade-separation of strategic links between the Westlink and M2/M3 would be significant, as pedestrians would no longer be in direct interaction with strategic through traffic within the interchange via signalised junction arrangements.

With the proposed changes to York Street, the new cycling provision would be an enhancement over existing conditions and the improvements to the junction and surrounding road layout (particularly in relation to the separation of strategic and local traffic) would result in safety benefits, reduction in severance, and improvements in journey time and ambience.

VEHICLE TRAVELLERS

The Vehicle Travellers assessment includes '*Views from the Road*' and '*Driver Stress*' and has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of DMRB 11.3.9.

The assessment concluded that vehicle travellers on most of the road links would experience a limited change in view and it is expected that grade-separation of strategic links between the Westlink and M2/M3 would generally result in reduced stress levels.

ROAD DRAINAGE & THE WATER ENVIRONMENT

The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of DMRB 11.3.10.6, and included identifying principal watercourses and assessing the potential impact on floodplains. To analyse the polluting potential from road runoff on adjacent receiving waters, an assessment was made of accidental spillage risk and runoff contaminant concentrations.

The assessment concluded that the Proposed Scheme would have minimal impact upon the water environment, from a water quality, hydromorphology and spillage risk perspective. It is unlikely that the Proposed Scheme would cause deterioration in the Belfast Harbour coastal water body, or prevent it from meeting its Water Framework Directive objectives.

There would be no overall risk to groundwater quality, as no discharges of road runoff to the ground are proposed with the drainage design.

The Proposed Scheme would be located in the coastal floodplain and without the flood protection measures incorporated, the proposed underpasses would be susceptible to flooding for events in excess of a 2% Annual Exceedance Probability (1-in-50 year) flood event.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The Geology & Soils assessment was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of DMRB 11.3.11.7 and addressed the impact on important geological mineral deposits, soils, and the possibility of hazardous materials being exposed. Any sites with educational or scientific interest due to their rarity were also considered.

The assessment concluded that there are relatively few key issues with regards to disturbance of soils, made ground, engineered fill, superficial deposits and bedrock. There would be no significant impacts on solid and superficial geology, or on soils of the region. Essentially, the removal of some soils and drift material of limited importance, gives an overall Neutral significance of effect.

While ground investigations have been undertaken, there is still potential for yet unidentified contamination to be discovered. If previously unidentified contamination is encountered during site works, a programme of soil sampling and testing would be undertaken to assess the appropriate remediation / mitigation measures, as outlined in sub-section 17.7.2 in Volume 1 of the ES.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The assessment of cumulative effects was undertaken in line with DMRB 11.2.5 and 11.2.6.

The technical assessments have considered the likely significant interacting impacts within each chapter of the Environmental Statement. During the assessment process, co-ordination took place between assessment specialists to ensure that interacting impacts were identified, assessed and, where appropriate, mitigated.

The potential for combined effects of a number of different projects, in combination with the project being assessed, has also been considered.

In terms of cumulative impacts from different projects, in general the effect would only be locally significant at worst and would not be a key decision making issue.

The Proposed Scheme was also tested against a 'High Demand' traffic growth scenario, which would better reflect the potential increase in demand if the proposed developments in the surrounding area are realised (i.e. as a worst case scenario). Again, in terms of cumulative impacts from different projects, in general the effect would only be locally significant at worst and would not be a key decision making issue.

CONCLUSIONS

The Environmental Statement summarises the environmental assessment carried out in accordance with National and European regulatory requirements.

The environmental assessment has been undertaken following the standard methodology set out in the DMRB Volume 11 (Environmental Assessment).

The gathering of baseline environmental data and subsequent assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Scheme have been used to develop appropriate mitigation measures. Many of these mitigation measures are incorporated into the design of the Proposed Scheme and reduce the impacts of the proposal.

Overall, although there are a number of significant environmental effects which cannot be overcome by appropriate mitigation measures, such as loss of property and private land, visual impact, and impact on community facilities, when considered against the total benefits of the Proposed Scheme, and with mitigation measures in place, it can be concluded that on balance these impacts are acceptable.

Since completing the Environmental Statement, the scheme has been subject to a sustainability assessment and has subsequently been awarded an 'Excellent' rating at Interim stage under the CEEQUAL sustainability assessment, rating and awards scheme for civil engineering projects.'

3.5 THE DEPARTMENT'S CASE – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Questions by Mr Acheson

I am Arthur Acheson, Architect. Am I right in saying, Chairman, that the European TENT route runs from Cork through Dublin to Belfast and ends in Belfast so it doesn't connect with Derry/Londonderry, Dungannon, Coleraine or even Bangor?

Mr Spiers: As I understand it it comes down the east of the coast from Belfast down to Dublin and through to Cork.

Mr Acheson: Does that extend through to Larne?

Mr Spiers: That corridor actually starts in Belfast.

Mr Acheson: A second question regarding the Strategic Advisory Group; as far as I am aware no applications for membership were invited on a public appointments basis, and the Strategic Advisory Group didn't include any community representatives, and reports about matters of the detail in the local area which I will come to later, but I just wanted to clarify that there was no public appointment and the membership of that Group was a closed Group organised by the DRD?

Mr Spiers: Mr Inspector, the Strategic Advisory Group was formulated from various interested parties, and includes representatives from the Forum for an Alternative Belfast as well as from Department of Social Development, Belfast City Council and the Planning Department and our own strategic advice, and includes also a representative from the University of Ulster. The people and the names of the organisations represented are quite clearly shown at the front of the report.

The Inspector: Does this constitute a closed group? Is this a group that you decided to put together yourselves or was it open for others to join? Was it a closed group in that you decided who was going to be part of it?

Mr Spiers: There were no open applications for membership of the group.

Questions on Behalf of Vectra by Mr Joe Brolly

Mr Brolly who was instructed by Paschal Lynch and Kieran Kelly, asked a number of questions regarding the Department's presentation. Below is an edited version of the exchange.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

His first question sought confirmation of something that Mr Bissland said: "Even though the scheme will create increased accidents we expect it to contribute positively to road safety."

Mr Bissland explained that the application of default accident rates in the model indicates an increase in the number of accidents, but the application of default accident rates has to be looked at in detail. The COBA computer programme has default accident rates and costs for specific link types. These default accident rates were used in the assessment of both the 'do something' and 'do-minimum' networks.

Mr Brolly: You are not taking into account the actual characteristics of the existing network or the local features of the planned scheme

Mr Bissland: When we are looking at the 'do-something' scenario we don't have actual accident rates so we have to do a comparison that's relative to do-minimum and do-something. Thus we use the default rates for both do-minimum network and do-something network. The assessment is the recognised industry standard mechanism for looking at the differences between a do-minimum network and a do-something network.

Mr Brolly: You say that is what the model produces: a 31% increase in road traffic accidents forecast as a result of the new system. If this does mean something how can your conclusion in your report and in what you have said today be: We believe this will improve road safety. How does that work?

Mr Bissland explained: The default accident rates in the COBA programme are based on the speeds of the links. The strategic links between the Westlink and the M2 have a 40mph speed limit on them. COBA assumes that those links are typical of any other urban type link, the kind of links which have a 30-mile per hour or 40 miles per hour speed on them. Because of that it assumes the links have junctions, direct frontage access, on-street parking, everything that's associated with that typical type of urban road.

However these strategic links are not that type of link. They don't have on-street parking, don't have junctions, don't have frontage access; but there is no mechanism within the COBA programme to change that. We have to use the 40-mile an hour speed limit. That triggers the default values which results in increased number of accidents and increased costs. Once we see the results compared to the model it is up to ourselves to interpret those results, and in this case those results are not directly representative of the type of link that we are putting in. We have to work around within the limitations of that bit of the COBA sub model.

Mr Brolly pointed out that there is no explanation of a more detailed localised assessment carried out. If you can arrive at an assessment of a 31% increase in road traffic accidents and say that is meaningless, there is very little point in going through that charade because you can say "We think the proposal will work fine, we don't think there will be that number of accidents".

Mr Bissland responded that the COBA default accident rates for a 40-mile per hour road with frontage access and on-street parking is not representative of the actual strategic links. Therefore we have to make a judgment on whether the application of that default rate is appropriate. I have concluded that we have to use the default rate but the end result is not appropriate. The reason is, if we were to run a test at 50 miles per hour rather than 40 miles an hour then that £49m disbenefit would actually become a benefit. It is as simple as that. It is all because the defaults are not suitable for the characteristic of the link. It is up to ourselves, as the professionals undertaking the assessment, to interpret what is coming out of the COBA model and apply our judgment to it.

We could have just gone forward and had 50-mile per hour speed limits but that would then have adversely affected the travel time benefits coming out of it, so we have to maintain the 40-mile per hour speed limit to get the correct speeds for the assessment, but then interpret the results out of the sub model, and that is exactly what we have done in the report.

It is also worth noting that we have carried that minus £49 million disbenefit all the way through the economics. We have fully reported all the results coming out of the COBA model and have then placed our interpretation of what is coming out of that based on our experience, which is perfectly reasonable.

Mr Brolly: You say it is perfectly reasonable but it is not backed up by any evidence of any kind throughout any of the documentation

Mr Bissland explained that they didn't have access to the actual information to allow them to make that determination, but it is important within the COBA assessment to make sure we are comparing like with like. By using default accident rates in the do minimum scenario and the do-something scenario we get a direct comparison between the two sets of models.

ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

Mr Brolly: Is it correct that the consultancy firm that carried out the road safety audit is the same consultancy firm that designed the scheme?

Mr Megarry confirmed that to be correct. The requirement within the standard is that there is sufficient professional distance between the audit team and the design team, and that is what we put in place. The audit team were professional engineers based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne who had no involvement with the scheme design.

Mr Brolly questioned the consultants costs. If the DRD scheme proceeds the consultants costs for the preparation and supervision costs of the scheme is £10.1m.

Mr Bissland pointed out that Mr Brolly was quoting the numbers from the appraisal. These are the standard values defined in DMRB for preparation costs and supervision costs at this stage of the assessment which we are required to use in the appraisal. The standard value from DMRB is that 5% of the total construction and land cost would be supervision costs, and 6% of the total construction and land cost will be the preparation costs. He added that this is not a direct link to our fees.

Mr Brolly moved on to the problem identified in the road safety audit of May 2014. He asked were there serious concerns about road safety in relation to the weaving length at the bottom of Westlink as it headed onto the M3 single lane link, and M2 double lane link and York Street.

Mr Megarry agreed that the audit did raise concern with regard to the movements of the traffic from the Clifton Street on-slip, such that a recommendation was made that the Clifton Street northbound slip lane should be closed.

Mr Brolly: The conclusion was that there is a potential for a significant amount of conflict between merging and diverging traffic. Vehicles moving from Clifton Street merge to the M3 link would have to move three lines to the right, crossing two lanes of "through" traffic to the M2, as well as traffic moving from the Westlink to the York Street link. The weaving length to the York Street link at 220 metres is considered to be slightly less than the minimum for an urban motorway, and the diverge to the M3 link is only a further 50 metres. The conclusion was "That it is considered this merge diverge arrangement is too complex and too confined and could lead to change/shunt collisions". Is that correct? And the recommendation was to close the Clifton Street northbound merge slip road.

Mr Megarry confirmed that was correct and that the audit has not changed. He added for the benefit of those present that Road Safety Audit is applied at four stages of the design. Stage one being the preliminary design, the point we are currently at. Stage two is at detailed design. Stage three is following completion of the construction of the scheme, and stage four is at 12 months and 36 month post completion period. The audit reports are publically available. The process outlined in HD19 allows for Exception Reports.

The project sponsor, identified through the process of HD19 is allowed, based on a number of defined factors that if they are considered to have been met; if I can paraphrase: "where the impacts have undue environmental impact, where the impacts have undue economic impacts upon the scheme", then an Exception Report to the audit recommendation can be made.

Mr Brolly suggested that if the road safety audit recommendation closing Clifton Street is implemented it kills the entire scheme. Closing the Clifton Street on-slip makes the scheme unviable. The Exception Report concludes "It is not proposed to implement this recommendation since the solution recommended is not considered to be suitable given the relevant economic and environmental constraints."

"The economic impact was assessed using the Department for Transport's COBA

software. Results from this analysis have identified that the closure of the Clifton Street on-slip road would lead to significant adverse impacts in the economic performance of the scheme and may render the scheme economically unviable."

Mr Megarry explained that is the basis upon which the project sponsor may issue an Exception Report. The process followed in HD19 identifies certain conditions that when met can result in a road safety recommendation not being implemented. Those conditions in the opinion of the project sponsor for the scheme have been met, so we are entirely within the process set out within HD19.

LOCAL CONDITIONS

Mr Brolly: You have identified in figure 5.3.1 the areas that were given consideration in and around the York St Interchange, and there are a series of blue boxes positioned to indicate the areas where you have considered issues relevant to traffic flow. I want to consider the localised conditions and see whether or not you have factored in any of the localised conditions when talking about road safety and road traffic accidents, because you say the 31% figure is an illusion. Is there anywhere where you have considered impact, actual road traffic accident impact of the non-closure of the Clifton road on-slip northbound? Is there anywhere where the actual impact in terms of road traffic accidents and people's safety is considered?

Mr Megarry: As part of the road safety audit brief, details of accidents that have occurred in a set period are included for the benefit of the road safety audit team to ensure that they have a realistic picture of the history of the accidents in the area. We have not undertaken an analysis of future accidents regarding a potential closure of the Clifton Street on-slip.

Mr Brolly said "You have no idea what the safety implications are of leaving it open".

Mr Megarry replied "Whilst I appreciate the focus of the audit is road safety, obviously the closure of the on-slip at Clifton Street would have a significant knock on affect to access from north Belfast, and it was felt that there would be an outcry with regard to the closure of the on-slip". If we follow the process set out in HD19, the project sponsor has prepared an Exception Report within the bounds of what he is allowed to prepare.

He added "we have made many presentations to many key stakeholders to the project, and about 99% of those presentations always start with an explanation of the constraints upon the scheme. We have not tried to shy away from the challenges imposed with creating a design that connects the strategic links. We have openly shared information. We have applied a process that considers specifically road safety audit. We have followed that process. We have taken on board recommendations. I believe we have followed the process that is set before us. The whole thrust of our assessment is that we can demonstrate that the scheme does work with regard to the movement of vehicles.

4. CONTRIBUTORS TO THE INQUIRY

4.1 SUPPORTERS

A total of 9 formal letters and e-mails expressing support were received by the 10th March 2015.

A summary of each point contained within these communications is set out below in bold typeface, followed immediately by the subsequent written Departmental response in full to each point which was raised.

We have considered this evidence together with any additional information provided during the three days of the Inquiry. We have also taken into account the evidence we obtained during our site visits.

At the end of the section devoted to each Supporter are the 'Inspectors' Comments' and where appropriate, 'Inspectors' Recommendations'.

In those instances where we have considered an overall comment would be appropriate these will be found in Section 7, 'Inspectors' Considerations' and Section 8, 'Inspectors' Recommendations'.

In those instances where we make little or no comment, it may be assumed that we are in broad agreement with the evidence presented by the Department.

4.1.1 Support Number	SU01
Supporter's Name	Norma Ingram
Date submitted.....	28 January 2015
<u>NIMVO plot number</u>	<u>N/A</u>

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

I AM HEARING AND READING ABOUT THE NEW YORK STREET INTERCHANGE, WHICH AS A CAR DRIVER MYSELF DRIVING FROM CARRICKFERGUS INTO BELFAST, I BELIEVE THIS IS A BRILLIANT PLAN.

TransportNI notes your email of 28 January 2015 and welcomes your general support of the Proposed Scheme.

CAN I ENQUIRE IF SHIPBOUY STREET WILL NO LONGER BE, I AM ASSUMING FROM THE DRAWINGS I HAVE SEEN THIS WILL BE THE CASE. MY FATHER-IN-LAW WAS FROM SHIPBOUY STREET AND MAY WELL HAVE BEEN BORN HERE, (WORKING ON INGRAM FAMILY TREE AT THE MOMENT) AS A FAMILY I GUESS THIS IS A LITTLE PART OF HISTORY WHICH WILL DISAPPEAR. SADLY MY FATHER-IN-LAW PASSED AWAY OCTOBER 2013.

As confirmed previously in our email response of 28 January 2015, Shipbuoy Street would be removed as part of the Proposed Scheme to make way for the new interchange links between the Westlink, M2 and M3 motorways.

We would thank-you once again for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Norma Ingram)

The opinions expressed by the Supporter and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.1.2 Support number **SU02**
Supporter's Name Ian James Parsley, Ultonia Communications
Date submitted 28 January 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

ON BEHALF OF MY COMPANY, I WISH TO STATE MY STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE ROADS ASPECT OF THE YORK STREET FLYOVER AS CURRENTLY PLANNED, AND STRONGLY COMMEND IT FOR CONSTRUCTION AT THE SOONEST POSSIBLE TIME.

TransportNI notes your email of 28 January 2015 and welcomes your strong support of the Proposed Scheme.

Construction Programme

It is anticipated that the scheme would require a minimum period of just over 3 years (38 months) to construct, subject to the advance completion of service diversion works or advance placement of service diversion Orders with the relevant utility providers. Based on the current programme, TransportNI expects construction works to commence in Autumn 2017, subject to successful progression of the Statutory Orders procedures (including Public Inquiry), availability of funding, and detailed economic appraisal. On this basis, the scheme could be completed by late 2020.

WE WOULD ADD THREE FURTHER POINTS, NONE OF WHICH SHOULD IN ANY WAY BE SEEN AS A REASON OR EXCUSE TO DELAY THE PROJECT.

RAIL: WE WOULD RECOMMEND THE DUALLING OF THE DARGAN BRIDGE CROSSING AS PART OF THE PROJECT. THIS IS THE OBVIOUS TIME TO PROCEED WITH IT.

Dargan Dualling:

TransportNI can confirm that works to dual the Dargan Bridge deck are not being incorporated into the Proposed Scheme. However, in order to future-proof the Dargan Bridge for such a scheme to dual the bridge deck, it is proposed that strengthening works to some 16 of its foundations are undertaken as part of the Proposed Scheme. Much of these strengthening works would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to undertake after completion of the Proposed Scheme without unacceptable disruption to road traffic. Dualling for the track itself would not form part of this road scheme contract and would be advanced by Translink under a separate commission.

CYCLE: WE WOULD RECOMMEND NEW SIGNAGE AND CLARITY AROUND NEW ROUTES FOR CYCLISTS WISHING TO CROSS THE LAGAN BRIDGE AT THIS POINT.

Cycling Provision:

TransportNI would note that, as the Lagan Bridge carries the M3 motorway, cyclists are not permitted to use the bridge to cross the river. The nearest facility to cross the River Lagan in the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme is the recently opened Lagan Weir footbridge. The provision of signage for cyclists within the extents of the Proposed Scheme would be considered as part of future detailed design.

SIDE ROADS: WE ARE UNCLEAR IF TWO WAY TRAFFIC IS REALLY REQUIRED IN THE DONEGALL QUAY/ALBERT SQUARE AREA, AND WONDER IF THIS SHOULD BE ONE-WAY (LIKELY CLOCKWISE).

Side Roads:

As outlined in our email response of 28 January 2015, since the Proposed Scheme does not extend to Donegall Quay, no proposals are included to change the existing traffic provision in this area. Any modification to traffic distribution in this area would be subject to a separate study through TransportNI's Traffic Section.

AS ONE FURTHER ADDITIONAL POINT, WE CONTINUE TO BE OF THE VIEW THAT SIGNAGE ON THE A12 WESTLINK ITSELF IS UNNECESSARILY COMPLEX. WE WOULD RECOMMEND THE IMPLEMENTATION DURING THE PROJECT OF NEW SIGNAGE, BASED ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN USAGE, WHICH WOULD CLARIFY ABSOLUTELY WHICH JUNCTION IS WHICH. WE ATTACH AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE SIGN FOR THE EXIT AT THE DIVIS ST JUNCTION NORTHBOUND MAY LOOK.

Traffic Sign Design

In the United Kingdom, only road traffic signs prescribed by the Traffic Signs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 (as amended) are permitted for use by TransportNI. The Regulations, along with the accompanying Traffic Signs Manual, ensure a consistent approach to road signs across the United Kingdom in terms of size, positioning and appearance.

IN CONCLUSION, WE REPEAT OUR STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT PRECISELY AS IT STANDS.

We would thank-you once again for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Ian James Parsley, Ultonia Communications)

The opinions expressed by the Supporter and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.1.3 Support Number	SU03
Supporter's Name	William Mateer
Date submitted.....	30 January 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

I WRITE TO SUPPORT THE UPGRADING OF THE NELSON STREET / M2 / M2 / WESTLINK TRAFFIC SYSTEM.

THIS MAJOR INVESTMENT IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE CITY IS LONG OVERDUE AND WILL BE WELCOMED BY THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC.

BELFAST HAS LAGGED BEHIND FOR MANY YEARS IN GOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND THIS NEW PROJECT WOULD NOT ONLY HELP COMMUTERS ON A DAILY BASIS BUT WOULD BE GOOD FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND INVESTMENT.

THE SOONER THE DOE GET THE GO AHEAD FOR THESE WORKS THE BETTER!!

TransportNI notes your email of 30 January 2015 and welcomes your support of the Proposed Scheme.

Construction Programme

It is anticipated that the scheme would require a minimum period of just over 3 years (38 months) to construct, subject to the advance completion of service diversion works or advance placement of service diversion Orders with the relevant utility providers. Based on the current programme, TransportNI expects construction works to commence in Autumn 2017, subject to successful progression of the Statutory Orders procedures (including Public Inquiry), availability of funding, and detailed economic appraisal. On this basis, the scheme could be completed by late 2020.

We would thank-you once again for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (William Mateer)

The opinions expressed by the Supporter and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.1.4 Support number SU04
Supporter's Name Conor Mulligan, Lagan Homes Ltd.
Date submitted..... 03 February 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

JUST LOOKING AT THE PLANS AND IT APPEARS TO WORK WELL ALLOWING TRAFFIC COMING FROM BOTH THE M2 & M3 TO HAVE CONTINUOUS ACCESS ONTO THE WESTLINK. HOWEVER, I CANNOT SEE HOW OTHER TRAFFIC CAN GAIN ACCESS TO THE WEST LINK FROM YORK STREET, DOCK STREET OR NELSON STREET.

TransportNI notes your email of 03 February 2015 and welcomes your general support of the Proposed Scheme.

We trust that our email response of 05 February 2015 to you addressed your queries.

In the Proposed Scheme, traffic would not be able to access the Westlink from York Street owing to considerable [vertical] level differences between the two routes and the problems associated with merging traffic flows within the weaving section. Traffic intending to travel to the Westlink from York Street or Nelson Street would be re-directed to the existing Clifton Street junction at the Frederick Street / York Street junction. Traffic intending to travel to the Westlink from Dock Street would be directed to use the new on-slip from Duncrue Street.

We would thank-you once again for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Conor Mulligan, Lagan Homes Ltd.)

The opinions expressed by the Supporter and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.1.5 Support numberSU05
Supporter's Name Andrew McKeever
Date submitted..... 11 February 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

I HAD A LOOK AT THE PLANS FOR THE YORKGATE INTERCHANGE IN THE RAMADA ENCORE YESTERDAY AND AGREE WITH EVERYTHING. IN FACT IF IT WAS UP TO ME I WOULD START THE WORK TOMORROW.

TransportNI notes your emails of 11 & 12 February 2015 and welcomes your general support of the Proposed Scheme.

Construction Programme

It is anticipated that the scheme would require a minimum period of just over 3 years (38 months) to construct, subject to the advance completion of service diversion works or advance placement of service diversion Orders with the relevant utility providers. Based on the current programme, TransportNI expects construction works to commence in Autumn 2017, subject to successful progression of the Statutory Orders procedures (including Public Inquiry), availability of funding, and detailed economic appraisal. On this basis, the scheme could be completed by late 2020.

I ALSO FORGOT TO SAY. WHEN I WAS IN THE ENCORE I MENTIONED TO A MEMBER OF THE DRD THAT THE EXECUTIVE SHOULD ASK THE IRISH GOVERNMENT FOR SOME MONEY TOWARDS THIS SCHEME IN THE WAY THAT THEY WERE PREPARED, FOR A WHILE AT LEAST, TO GIVE US MONEY FOR THE A5 SCHEME. AFTERALL, THE YORKGATE INTERCHANGE IS THE MAIN ROUTE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, THE NORTH COAST AND LARNE HARBOUR DOWN TO DUBLIN. THEY CAN ONLY SAY 'YES' OR 'NO'.

At this time, it is not expected that the Irish Government would make a direct contribution to the construction cost of the Proposed Scheme.

We would thank-you once again for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Andrew McKeever)

The opinions expressed by the Supporter and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.1.6 Support numberSU06
Supporter's Name Andrew Crothers
Date submitted..... 24 February 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above correspondence and responds as follows:

I WOULD JUST LIKE TO VOICE MY OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE. THIS PROJECT IS LONG OVERDUE AS THIS IS QUITE EASILY THE BUSIEST AND WORST JUNCTION (FOR TRAFFIC FLOW) IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE SOONER THE PROJECT STARTS, THE BETTER!

TransportNI notes your email of 24 February 2015 and welcomes your strong support of the Proposed Scheme.

Construction Programme

It is anticipated that the scheme would require a minimum period of just over 3 years (38 months) to construct, subject to the advance completion of service diversion works or advance placement of service diversion Orders with the relevant utility providers. Based on the current programme, TransportNI expects construction works to commence in Autumn 2017, subject to successful progression of the Statutory Orders procedures (including Public Inquiry), availability of funding, and detailed economic appraisal. On this basis, the scheme could be completed by late 2020.

We would thank-you once again for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Andrew Crothers)

The opinions expressed by the Supporter and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.1.7. Support numberSU07
Supporter's Name Seamus Leheny, Freight Transport Association
Date submitted..... 09 March 2015
NIMVO plot numberN/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

THE FREIGHT TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION (FTA) IS ONE OF THE UK'S LARGEST TRADE ASSOCIATIONS AND REPRESENTS OVER 14,500 COMPANIES RELYING ON OR PROVIDING TRANSPORT INTEGRATION BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, TO OR FROM THE UK. OUR MEMBERS INCLUDE HAULIERS, FREIGHT FORWARDERS, RAIL, SEA AND AIR FREIGHT OPERATORS, THROUGH TO CUSTOMERS - PRODUCERS, MANUFACTURERS, WHOLESALERS AND RETAILERS. THEY COVER ALL MODES OF TRANSPORT - ROAD, RAIL, AIR AND SEA.

FTA MEMBERS OPERATE OVER 200,000 COMMERCIAL GOODS VEHICLES ON THE ROADS IN THE UK; APPROXIMATELY HALF OF THE UK FLEET. FTA MEMBERS ALSO CONSIGN AROUND 90 PER CENT OF GOODS MOVED BY RAIL AND AROUND 70 PER CENT OF GOODS MOVED BY AIR AND SEA.

THE FTA REPRESENT OVER 300 MEMBERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND FROM RIGHT ACROSS THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY AND WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT FORWARD OUR VIEWS REGARDING THE DRAFT ORDERS CONCERNING THE UPGRADE OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE IN BELFAST.

THE FREIGHT TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION (FTA) STRONGLY WELCOME AND SUPPORT THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE AS OUTLINED IN THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT DATED JANUARY 2015.

FTA ARE PLEASED THAT THE CHOSEN OPTION WHICH WAS ONE OF FOUR INITIALLY CONSIDERED HAS BEEN SELECTED.

THE REASONS FOR OUR SUPPORT OF THIS SCHEME ARE AS FOLLOWS :

- **BETTER CONNECTIVITY OF THE STRATEGIC ROAD NETWORK**

THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE IS A PIVOTAL COMPONENT OF THE STRATEGIC ROAD NETWORK FOR NORTHERN IRELAND AS IT CONNECTS ALL MAJOR TRAFFIC FLOWS AND THE VAST MAJORITY OF FREIGHT MOVEMENTS WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND.

MAJOR DISTRIBUTION CENTRES THAT SERVE NORTHERN IRELAND ARE LOCATED IN BELFAST HARBOUR ESTATE, BOUCHER AND MALLUSK INDUSTRIAL ESTATES THEREFORE FOR GOODS TO GET TO FINAL DELIVERY POINTS, REGARDLESS OF THE DISTRIBUTION CENTRES LOCATION, THE MAJORITY OF GOODS ARE DESTINED TO TRANSIT VIA THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE AT SOME POINT IN THEIR JOURNEY.

- **PORT ACCESS**

ACCESS TO AND FROM BELFAST HARBOUR WILL BE IMPROVED THUS IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF OPERATORS GETTING GOODS TO MARKET WHICH IS VITAL IN GROWING THE ECONOMY AND ATTRACTING INWARD INVESTMENT.

IN 2014 BELFAST HARBOUR MOVED 66% OF FREIGHT TRAFFIC IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH WAS 23 MILLION TONNES. THE PROPOSED ON-SLIP FROM DUNCRUE STREET WILL IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF FREIGHT TRAFFIC EXITING THE PORT FOR SOUTHBOUND TRAFFIC, ESPECIALLY FROM THE SOUTHERN SECTION OF THE PORT WHICH CATERS FOR HIGH VOLUME BULK GOODS.

ACCESS AT FORTWILLIAM FOR CONTAINER AND FERRY TRAFFIC WILL ALSO BE GREATLY IMPROVED BOTH FOR TRAFFIC FROM NORTH AND SOUTH DUE TO REDUCED CONGESTION ON WESTLINK AND M2 WHICH IS CURRENTLY CAUSED BY CONGESTION AT THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE TRAFFIC SIGNALS.

9% OF NI FREIGHT TRAFFIC IS SHIPPED VIA LARNE THEREFORE ACCESS TO LARNE PORT WILL BE GREATLY IMPROVED WITH A BETTER CONNECTION BETWEEN THE M1, M2 AND THE NEWLY COMPLETED A8.

THIS WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT FOR LARNE HARBOUR AS IT WILL MEAN OPERATORS FROM SOUTH OF BELFAST WILL HAVE BETTER ACCESS AND IMPROVED JOURNEY TIMES TO LARNE. IMPROVING COMPETITION BETWEEN BOTH PORTS WILL ULTIMATELY LEAD TO SAVING OPERATORS MONEY AND CONSEQUENTLY END USERS.

- **FUEL ECONOMY**

40% OF OPERATING COSTS FOR HAULAGE COMPANIES IS FUEL. MODERN EURO 6 ENGINES ARE EXCELLENT AT CONSERVING FUEL IN CONSISTENT MOVING TRAFFIC HOWEVER STOP START MOVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH URBAN TRAFFIC AND TRAFFIC LIGHTS COUNTERACTS THESE SAVINGS. WITH THE REMOVAL OF TRAFFIC SIGNALS FOR TRAFFIC TRAVELLING BETWEEN M1, M2 AND M3, THE CONSEQUENCE IS THAT FREIGHT TRAFFIC WILL OPERATE MORE EFFICIENTLY AND BE MORE COST EFFECTIVE.

- **AIR QUALITY**

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL RECENTLY ASSESSED THE IMPACT THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT WOULD HAVE WITH REGARDS TO HELPING ACHIEVE THE EU AIR QUALITY TARGETS FOR BELFAST. THE TEST EVALUATED THE IMPACT OF IMPROVED THROUGHPUT OF THE JUNCTION BY REDUCING STOP START ACTIVITY BASED ON THE RATIONAL THAT REMOVING EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNALS AT THE JUNCTION WILL IN EFFECT IMPROVE THE THROUGHPUT OF TRAFFIC. THE RESULTS INDICATE THAT THE IMPACT FROM SMOOTHING THE DRIVING PATTERN AT THE TWO JUNCTIONS WOULD REDUCE CONCENTRATIONS OF ROAD NO₂ BY ~60%. THE TEST ASSUMED AN AVERAGE SPEED OF ~6 KM/H IN THE CONGESTED MODE AND ~56 KM/H IN THE FREE FLOW MODE.

IN TERMS OF AIR QUALITY, THE SCHEME IS CONSIDERED AS A MEANS OF REDUCING LOCALISED EMISSIONS ON CONNECTING ROADS (I.E. AS A RESULT OF RELIEVING A SIGNIFICANT CONGESTION HOTSPOT) AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, INCREMENTAL REDUCTIONS IN BACKGROUND EMISSIONS, WHICH OF COURSE WILL HAVE A WIDER IMPACT ON EXPOSURE.

MODERN EURO 6 LGV ENGINES ARE EXTREMELY GOOD AT CUTTING CARBON EMISSIONS WHEN DRIVEN AT A CONSISTENT SPEED BUT THESE BENEFITS ARE HINDERED WHEN THE VEHICLE IS THEN DRIVEN AT INCONSISTENT STOP START INTERVALS.

TransportNI notes your email and associated comprehensive letter of 09 March 2015 and welcomes your strong support of the Proposed Scheme.

Construction Programme

It is anticipated that the scheme would require a minimum period of just over 3 years (38 months) to construct, subject to the advance completion of service diversion works or advance placement of service diversion Orders with the relevant utility providers. Based on the current programme, TransportNI expects construction works to commence in Autumn 2017, subject to successful progression of the Statutory Orders procedures (including Public Inquiry), availability of funding, and detailed economic appraisal. On this basis, the scheme could be completed by late 2020.

THE FTA WELCOMES THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH TRANSPORTNI ON THE PROGRESS OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE AND WE APPRECIATE ANY FUTURE FEEDBACK, CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES AND UPDATES IN DUE COURSE.

ONE AREA THAT WE WOULD BE KEEN TO BE CONSULTED ON IS THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN THAT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED DURING CONSTRUCTION. IT IS LIKELY THAT THIS WOULD HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON FREIGHT MOVEMENTS TO AND FROM PORTS AND WELL AS DELIVERIES TO BELFAST THEREFORE WE WOULD REQUEST ANY CONSTRAINTS PUT IN PLACE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE NEED FOR GOODS VEHICLES TO STILL HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THE CITY CENTRE AND PORTS. THE FTA WOULD ALSO REQUEST THAT AN INFORMATION SYSTEM IS ESTABLISHED TO ADVISE OPERATORS DURING THE PROPOSED SCHEME CONSTRUCTION. ADEQUATE ACCESS AND RELIABLE INFORMATION WILL NOT ONLY ENSURE COMMERCE IS NOT UNDULY AFFECTED BY DELAYS IN DELIVERIES AND COLLECTIONS BUT IT WILL ALSO PROTECT CITY RESIDENTS AND VULNERABLE ROAD USERS FROM SOME OPERATORS WHO MAY SEEK ALTERNATIVE ROUTES THAT ARE UNSUITABLE FOR LARGE GOODS VEHICLES.

Traffic Management during Construction

A Temporary Traffic Management Strategy Group (TTMSG) has been established to consider requirements for temporary traffic management during the construction period. The TTMSG is considering several points raised by your response, including:

Requirements for minimum lane provision through the works;

Alternative routes during the construction period;

Communication with the general public and other key stakeholders.

TransportNI confirms that it would continue to consult with the Freight Transport Association regarding the development of the proposed Temporary Traffic Management (TTM) for the construction phase.

IN CONCLUSION, THE FTA FULLY SUPPORTS THE PROPOSED PLANS TO CONSTRUCT THE NEW YORK STREET INTERCHANGE AS IT WILL RESULT IN A MORE EFFICIENT ROAD NETWORK FOR COMMERCIAL GOODS VEHICLES AND IT WILL REDUCE EMISSIONS BY SUCH VEHICLES THEREFORE BRINGING WITH IT ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY OF BELFAST AND BEYOND.

We would thank-you once again for your interest in this scheme.

Mr Seamus Leheny made a presentation at the Inquiry on behalf of the FTA in the afternoon of Day 1 as follows:

'The Freight Transport Association (FTA) is one of the UK's largest trade associations and represents over 14,500 companies relying on or providing transport. Our members include hauliers, freight forwarders, rail, sea and air freight operators, through to customers -producers, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers.

The FTA represent over 300 members in Northern Ireland from right across the logistics industry and we welcome the opportunity to put forward our views regarding the draft orders concerning the upgrade of the York Street Interchange in Belfast.

The Freight Transport Association (FTA) strongly welcome and support the proposed development of the York Street Interchange as outlined in the current Environmental Statement dated January 2015.

FTA are pleased that the chosen option which was one of four initially considered has been selected.

Commercial goods vehicles in Northern Ireland are in fact the only vehicles that pay a specific fee to use the road network. This charge is the HGV Road User Levy introduced on 1st April 2014 and can cost an operator up to £1,000 per annum for vehicles at 12 Tonnes and more. This fee is also applicable to non-UK registered HGV's who can pay up to £10 per day to drive in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Additionally, commercial vehicle operators contribute significant revenue to government via fuel duty and vehicle ownership tax therefore hauliers and other HGV operators more than pay their way and therefore deserve a road infrastructure that supports their industry.

The reasons for our support of this scheme are as follows:

Improved connectivity of the Strategic Road Network

The York Street Interchange is a pivotal component of the Strategic Road Network for Northern Ireland as it connects all major traffic flows and the vast majority of freight movements within Northern Ireland.

Major distribution centres that serve Northern Ireland are located in Belfast Harbour estate, Boucher and Mallusk industrial estates therefore for goods to get to final delivery points, regardless of the distribution centres location, the majority of goods are destined to transit via the York Street Interchange at some point in their journey. Additionally, to minimise costs the majority of retailers now rely on 'Just in Time Deliveries' therefore it is vital that we have a modern strategic road network to support modern commerce.

Improved Port access and supply chain

Access to and from Belfast Harbour will be improved thus improving the efficiency of operators getting goods to market which is vital in growing the economy and attracting inward investment.

In the past 20 years Belfast Harbour has invested over £400m to enhance its infrastructure and provide customers with some of the most modern quays, terminals and warehousing on the island of Ireland - Belfast Harbour competes on an island-wide basis and with inter-port competition increasing it is not just the port facilities that continually need to enhance their facilities but our local strategic road network.

In 2014 Belfast Harbour moved 66% of freight traffic in Northern Ireland which was 23 million tonnes.

2014 figures at Belfast Harbour:

- Freight Vehicles (RoRo) - 476,000
- Containers - 125,000
- Bulk - 9.6 Million Tonnes (369,230 HGV loads based on the maximum of 26 tonnes)
- Total - 971,000 Approximate HGV Import/Export movements in and out of Belfast Harbour per annum

Regarding the RoRo trailers, FTA have been advised by the Ferry operator that approximately 50% of volume which is around 238,000 would transit the M1 / Westlink with the remainder on the M2 and M3, On same basis for all commodity traffic then we can estimate that approximately 485,000 HGV vehicles transit the York Street Westlink per annum - THIS ONLY ACCOUNTS FOR BELFAST PORT IMPORT AND EXPORT TRAFFIC ONLY and does not include own account transport, construction, manufacturing and freight moving internally within NI and ROI.

9% of NI freight traffic is shipped via Larne therefore access to Larne port will be greatly improved with a better connection between the M1, M2 and the newly completed A8. This will have a positive effect for Larne Harbour as it will mean operators from South of Belfast will have better access and improved journey times to Larne. Improving competition between both ports will ultimately lead to saving operators money and consequently end users.

Transport costs

40% of operating costs for Haulage companies is fuel. Modern Euro 5 & 6 engines are excellent at conserving fuel in consistent moving traffic however stop start movements associated with urban traffic and traffic lights counteracts these savings. With the removal of traffic signals for traffic travelling between M1, M2 and M3, the consequence is that freight traffic will operate more efficiently and be more cost effective.

Data compiled by the International Road Transport Union based in Geneva, working alongside the United Nations and the EU shows the consequences of stop start movement activity for a 40 Tonne HGV which is the current scenario on the Westlink at the York Street junction.

An HGV stopping once within 1 km increases fuel consumption by 86% and if stopping twice within 1 km it rises by a staggering 200% increase in fuel consumption. As you can imagine this not only drives up costs within our local supply chain but the additional emissions can affect those living and working near such traffic.

Our industry has strived to reduce fuel consumption with a reduction in 36% between 1970 and 2004. However such improvements can only be assisted with consistent driving infrastructure.

Additionally the average cost of operating a 44 Tonne HGV is £1 per minute therefore the anticipated improvement to journey time transiting the York Street Interchange will deliver real savings to operators.

Environment

Belfast City Council recently assessed the impact the York Street Interchange improvement would have with regards to helping achieve the EU Air Quality targets for Belfast. The test evaluated the impact of improved throughput of the junction by reducing stop start driving. The results indicate that the impact from smoothing the driving pattern at the two junctions would reduce concentrations of road Nitrogen Dioxide by -60%. The test assumed an average speed of ~6 km/h in the congested mode and -56 km/h in the free flow mode.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs recently published a Draft Air Quality Plan for the achievement of EU air quality limits value for nitrogen dioxide in Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area. The draft plan highlights the Westlink corridor for high levels of Nitrogen Dioxide and highlights the York Street Interchange as likely to have a high impact in reducing these emissions.

Modern Euro 5 and 6 HGV engines are extremely good at cutting carbon emissions when driven at a consistent speed but these benefits are hindered when the vehicle is then driven at inconsistent stop start intervals. 20 new trucks produce fewer particulate emissions than a single truck manufactured before 1993.

Finally with regards to pollution, modern HGV's are much quieter when driven at a consistent speed without stop start activity. 25 modern trucks now make no more noise than a truck manufactured before 1980. By improving the flow of traffic at the York Street Interchange then traffic noise from HGV's will reduce as the engines are designed to be quieter when running at a consistent speed.

One area that we would be keen to be consulted on is the Traffic Management Plan that would be implemented during construction. It is likely that this would have a major impact on freight movements to and from ports and well as deliveries in and around Belfast therefore we would request any constraints put in place take into consideration the need for goods vehicles to still have adequate access to the city centre and port.

The FTA would also request that an appropriate information system is established to advise operators during the proposed scheme construction period. Adequate access, parking and reliable information will not only ensure commerce is not unduly affected by delays in deliveries and collections but it will also protect city residents and vulnerable road users from some operators who may seek alternative routes that are unsuitable for HGV's.

In conclusion, the FTA fully supports the proposed plans to construct the new York Street Interchange, as it will result in a more efficient road network for commercial goods vehicles, it will reduce vehicle emissions by such vehicles therefore bringing with it economic and environmental benefits for industry right across Northern Ireland and the general public in Belfast.'

Inspectors' Comments (Seamus Leheny, Freight Transport Association)

The points made by Mr Leheny in his presentation supporting the proposed scheme have been noted.

It is clear that a degree of disruption to traffic flows would be inevitable during such a major alteration to the existing road network in the York Street area. This being the case it would be important for the FTA to be involved in the formulation of the essential Traffic Management Plan and to be informed in advance of any changes to all agreed arrangements.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Seamus Leheny, Freight Transport Association)

- FTA to be fully involved in the formulation of the Traffic Management Plan to be implemented during the construction phase of the Scheme.
- An appropriate information system to be established by TNI to advise FTA Operators of access, parking and other relevant arrangements to be applied during the construction phase.

4.1.8. Support number	SU08
Supporter's Name	Arthur Murphy, P&O Ferries
Date submitted.....	11 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

IN RESPONSE TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON 27TH JANUARY 2015, THAT THE ABOVE PROPOSED SCHEME REPORT AND ASSOCIATED STATEMENTS HAVE NOW BEEN PUBLISHED, P&O FERRIES WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER ITS' FULL SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT AND WOULD ENCOURAGE ITS' EXPEDITIOUS PROGRESSION.

THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THIS KEY INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECT TO THE ECONOMY OF NORTHERN IRELAND CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. THE CONNECTIVITY OF THE THREE MAIN ARTERIAL MOTORWAYS IS VITAL TO SUSTAIN THE ROAD HAULAGE INDUSTRY'S PIVOTAL ROLE IN DELIVERING NORTHERN IRISH GOODS TO MARKET MORE EFFICIENTLY AND WITH GREATER COST EFFECTIVENESS.

AS A COMPANY THAT WORKS CLOSELY WITH LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT COMPANIES, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE DO WHATEVER WE CAN TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN THIS SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY. IT IS OUR DUTY TO LOBBY GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO MAKE STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE IN OUR BUSINESS HINTERLAND. TO THAT END WE HAVE MET WITH THE MINISTER TO CONVEY OUR VIEWS ABOUT IMPROVING THE ROAD NETWORK IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND TO INVITE HIM TO MATCH OUR EFFORTS TO PERSUADE THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO INVEST IN THE ARTERIAL ROUTES ON SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND THAT ARE SO IMPORTANT TO OUR CUSTOMER BASE.

WE ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE THE MINISTER AND HIS DEPARTMENT TEAM ON TAKING THE FORWARD-LOOKING DECISION TO PRESS AHEAD WITH THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE PROJECT ESPECIALLY DURING THESE FINANCIALLY CHASTENED TIMES.

P&O FERRIES VIEWS THIS PROJECT AS EQUAL IN IMPORTANCE TO THE SOON TO BE COMPLETED A8 LARNE-BELFAST DUAL CARRIAGEWAY SCHEME. BOTH WILL IMPROVE THE CONVENIENCE AND REACHABILITY OF THE PORT OF LARNE TO HAULIERS OPERATING ACROSS THE ISLAND OF IRELAND. INDEED SUCH NEW PROJECTS WILL DELIVER JOURNEY RELIABILITY, FUEL ECONOMY AND TIME SAVING OPPORTUNITIES TO THE ROAD HAULAGE INDUSTRY AND THEREFORE SUPPORT THE SHORTEST FASTEST MOST FREQUENT FERRY LINK BETWEEN NORTHERN IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN, LARNE TO CAIRNRYAN.

FROM BOTH NARROW COMPANY AND THE BROADER BUSINESS VIEWPOINTS, P&O FERRIES BELIEVES THAT THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE WILL PROVIDE LASTING ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE LOCAL INDUSTRIAL, RETAIL AND AGRI-FOOD SECTORS AS WELL AS THE TOURISM SECTOR. ALL OF THESE ARE VITAL TO MAINTAINING OUR ROLE IN DELIVERING COMPETITIVE FERRY SERVICES ON THE IRISH SEA.

TransportNI notes your email and associated letter of 03 March 2015 and welcomes your strong support of the Proposed Scheme.

Construction Programme

It is anticipated that the scheme would require a minimum period of just over 3 years (38 months) to construct, subject to the advance completion of service diversion works or advance placement of service diversion Orders with the relevant utility providers. Based on the current programme, TransportNI expects construction works to commence in Autumn 2017, subject to successful progression of the Statutory Orders procedures (including Public Inquiry), availability of funding, and detailed economic appraisal. On this basis, the scheme could be completed by late 2020.

We would thank-you once again for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Arthur Murphy, P&O Ferries)

The opinions expressed by the Supporter and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.1.9. Support numberSU09
Supporter's NameBernard Clarke, Translink
Date submitted..... 13 March 2015
NIMVO plot numberN/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

TRANSLINK, AS A KEY STAKEHOLDER, WOULD WISH TO PUT ON RECORD THEIR GENERAL SUPPORT FOR THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

TransportNI notes your email of 13 March 2015 and welcomes your general support of the Proposed Scheme.

WITH RESPECT TO THE PUBLICATION AND EXHIBITION LAST MONTH OF THE DRAFT ORDERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT, WE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMEND OFFICIALS FROM DRD TRANSPORTNI AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM URS FOR THE INCLUSION OF A NEW SOUTHBOUND BUS LANE ON YORK STREET AS WELL AS REMIND THEM THAT URGENT CONSIDERATION NOW NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO THE TEMPORARY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (TTMS) THAT WILL BE NEEDED FOR THE ANTICIPATED 3 YEAR CONSTRUCTION PERIOD, PARTICULARLY AS WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS NOW EXPECTED THAT THE START DATE FOR THE SCHEME IS TO BE ACCELERATED TO 2017/18.

Construction Programme

It is anticipated that the scheme would require a minimum period of just over 3 years (38 months) to construct, subject to the advance completion of service diversion works or advance placement of service diversion Orders with the relevant utility providers. Based on the current programme, TransportNI expects construction works to commence in Autumn 2017, subject to successful progression of the Statutory Orders procedures (including Public Inquiry), availability of funding, and detailed economic appraisal. On this basis, the scheme could be completed by late 2020.

Traffic Management during Construction

TransportNI notes that further to your response, a Temporary Traffic Management Strategy Group (TTMSG) has been established comprising representatives from both TransportNI and Translink to consider requirements for temporary traffic management during the construction period. The TTMSG is considering several points raised by your response, including:

Requirements for minimum lane provision through the works;

Access for public transport services through the works;

The potential delivery of additional Park and Ride facilities;

The potential delivery of a hard shoulder busway citybound on the M2 (as requested in your response), along with the potential extension of the existing M1 citybound hard shoulder busway to Sprucefield;

Alternative routes during the construction period;

Communication with the general public and other key stakeholders.

AS HAS BEEN THE EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER RECENT STRATEGIC ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES E.G. M1 / WESTLINK AND THE A2 SHORE ROAD AT GREENISLAND, PUBLIC TRANSPORT WILL HAVE A KEY ROLE, PARTICULARLY AS OVERALL TRAVEL DEMAND IN THE ENVIRONS OF THE SCHEME WILL CHANGE CONSIDERABLY WITH THE ULSTER UNIVERSITY AT YORK STREET OPENING IN SEPTEMBER 2018.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE RECENT 2015 / 16 BUDGET SETTLEMENT AND WITH FURTHER FUNDING CUTS ANTICIPATED IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS WILL IMPACT ON OUR COLLECTIVE ABILITY TO AMELIORATE THE POTENTIAL TRAFFIC DISRUPTION ALONG THE M2, WESTLINK AND M3 AS WELL AS ADJACENT ROADS.

FOR THESE REASONS, TRANSLINK FORMALLY REQUEST DRD TRANSPORTNI TO NOW DEVELOP PROPOSALS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF HARD SHOULDER BUS LANE(S) ON THE M2 TO BE OPERATIVE IN ADVANCE OF THE START OF THE CONSTRUCTION. THESE IN COMBINATION WITH THE NEW PARK & RIDE SCHEME AT BALLYMARTIN, WHICH COMMENCES OPERATION IN JULY 2015, WILL OFF-SET THE LOSS OF THE CAR PARKS AT NORTHSIDE AND YORK STREET – A TOTAL OF 369 SPACES – (BOTH

NEEDED FOR THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE SCHEME) BUT ALSO HELP TO ACHIEVE THE DEMANDING BUS AND RAIL MODAL SHARE TARGETS SET FOR THE RELOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER.

Traffic Management during Construction

As noted above, a Temporary Traffic Management Strategy Group (TTMSG) has been established comprising representatives from both TransportNI and Translink to consider requirements for temporary traffic management during the construction period. The TTMSG is considering several points raised by your response, including:

Requirements for minimum lane provision through the works;

Access for public transport services through the works;

The potential delivery of additional Park and Ride facilities;

The potential delivery of a hard shoulder busway citybound on the M2 (as requested in your response), along with the potential extension of the existing M1 citybound hard shoulder busway to Sprucefield;

Alternative routes during the construction period;

Communication with the general public and other key stakeholders.

Translink look forward to working with DRD TransportNI in developing suitable TTMS arrangements as well as appropriate traffic and travel advice in advance of, as well as during, the construction of the York Street Interchange scheme.

We would thank-you once again for your interest in this scheme and look forward to working with Translink in advance of and during construction.

Inspectors' Comments (Bernard Clarke, Translink)

The opinions expressed by the Supporter and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Bernard Clarke, Translink)

- TNI to work with Translink in order to develop suitable temporary traffic management arrangements and appropriate traffic and travel advice, both before and during the construction of the proposed scheme.

4.2 **OBJECTORS**

Assessment of The Objections

A total of 33 objections were received by the closing date of 10th March 2015.

A summary of each point contained within these objections is set out in bold typeface, followed immediately by the subsequent written Departmental response in full to each issue which was raised.

We have considered this evidence, together with the additional information provided during the three days of the Inquiry by Objectors, their Representatives, the TNI Team and the Consultants (URS). We have also taken into account the evidence we obtained during our site visits which took place both before and after the Public Inquiry held at the Spires Centre.

At the end of the section devoted to each Objector and/or Agents) are the 'Inspectors' Comments' and where appropriate, 'Inspectors' Recommendations'.

In those instances where we have considered an overall comment would be appropriate these will be found in Section 7, 'Inspectors' Considerations' and Section 8, 'Inspectors' Recommendations'.

In those instances where we make little or no comment, it may be assumed that we are in broad agreement with the evidence presented by the Department.

4.2.1 Objection number..... OBJ01

Objectors Name..... Cormac Duffy
Date submitted 28 January 2015
NIMVO plot number..... N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I AM WRITING TO OPPOSE THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE ON THE BASIS OF COST. THE PROPOSED £125 – 165 MILLION POUND PROJECT DOES NOT REPRESENT VALUE FOR MONEY AT A TIME OF BUDGET CUTS.

Value for Money

A detailed Traffic and Economic assessment has been undertaken using Cost Benefit Analysis (COBA) and Queues and Delays at Roadworks (QUADRO) techniques and computer models, in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, to quantify the effects of the Proposed Scheme. Detailed costs have been prepared and included in the assessment to determine the economic value of the scheme. A range of sensitivity tests has also been undertaken to examine the extent to which results from the computer models vary under different scenarios.

The method adopted for the Traffic and Economic assessment is in line with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The results of the COBA economic assessment, reported in the published Proposed Scheme Report, indicate that the Proposed Scheme represents good value for money with an overall Net Present Value of £99.780m and a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334.

The results of the various sensitivity tests indicate that the Proposed Scheme would generate a positive Net Present Value over a range of test scenarios where the overall benefits exceed the cost of the scheme. It is concluded that the Proposed

Scheme would improve operating conditions in the York Street area and represents good value for money.

MORE SERIOUSLY GIVEN THE LACK OF INVESTMENT IN THE ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE WEST OF THE BANN WHERE THE PROPOSED A5 IMPROVEMENTS ARE NOT DUE FOR COMPLETION UNTIL 2028 (IF NOT FURTHER DELAYED) AND WHERE THERE ISN'T EVEN A DATE FOR THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE A6, THE SPENDING OF A FURTHER £165 MILLION ON BELFAST'S ROADS IS UNJUSTIFIABLE, DOES NOT TARGET SOCIAL NEED, DOES NOT PROMOTE BALANCED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACCORDINGLY DOES NOT PASS EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS.

THE PRIORITY OF STRATEGIC ROADS DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE THE COMPLETION OF THE A6 BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN IN CITIES IN THE STATE AND A5 WESTERN CORRIDOR. ONLY THEN SHOULD ANY FURTHER ROAD DEVELOPMENT HAPPEN IN BELFAST.

Development priorities

The existing junction consists of a signalised gyratory 'box' system with traffic signals at each corner, serving over 100,000 traffic movements per day. It is a source of traffic congestion and requires careful traffic management, particularly in peak periods, to ensure that the gyratory system does not become blocked as this would result in significant traffic delays.

The existing junction is therefore considered a 'bottleneck' on the Strategic Road Network, in accordance with the definition established by the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, i.e.:

"...where localised restrictions cause undue congestion and thereby delay for freight, public transport and cars."

The programme to improve transport links in Northern Ireland has been developed and is based on a series of key documents which include:

- The 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone';
- 'Moving Forward: The Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement' published in 1998;
- 'Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 - Shaping our Future' published in 2002;
- 'Regional Development Strategy 2035 – Building a Better Future' published in 2012;
- 'Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012' published in 2012;
- 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation', published in 2012;
- 'Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015' published in 2005;
- 'Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015' (BMTP) published in 2004;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018;
- Investment Delivery Plan for Roads;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021; and
- Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015;

The Regional Transportation Strategy recognises the importance of removing bottlenecks on the Key Transport Corridors. The bottleneck at the York Street Interchange is identified in the BMTP and the Consultation Document ‘*Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015*’ published in 2006.

Social Need

The Proposed Scheme has been subject to a Section 75 Equality of Opportunity Screening Analysis as part of the scheme development process. Schemes are progressed on the basis of need and the importance of this project in relation to the transport network, Belfast Harbour and the City Airport is recognised by its inclusion on the Trans-European Network.

Priority of Schemes

Subject to satisfactory completion of the Statutory Processes, the ultimate decision regarding timing and relative priority of schemes lies with the Minister for Regional Development.

Inspectors’ Comments (Cormak Duffy)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI written responses set out above have been noted.

4.2.2 Objection number	OBJ02
Objectors Name.....	Conor Duffy
Date submitted.....	29 January 2015
NIMVO plot number.....	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I AM WRITING TO OPPOSE THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE ON THE BASIS OF COST. THE PROPOSED £125 – 165 MILLION POUND PROJECT DOES NOT REPRESENT VALUE FOR MONEY AT A TIME OF BUDGET CUTS.

Value for Money

A detailed Traffic and Economic assessment has been undertaken using Cost Benefit Analysis (COBA) and Queues and Delays at Roadworks (QUADRO) techniques and computer models, in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, to quantify the effects of the Proposed Scheme. Detailed costs have been prepared and included in the assessment to determine the economic value of the scheme. A range of sensitivity tests has also been undertaken to examine the extent to which results from the computer models vary under different scenarios.

The method adopted for the Traffic and Economic assessment is in line with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The results of the COBA economic assessment, reported in the published Proposed Scheme Report, indicate that the Proposed Scheme represents good value for money with an overall Net Present Value of £99.780m and a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334.

The results of the various sensitivity tests indicate that the Proposed Scheme would generate a positive Net Present Value over a range of test scenarios where the

overall benefits exceed the cost of the scheme. It is concluded that the Proposed Scheme would improve operating conditions in the York Street area and represents good value for money.

MORE SERIOUSLY GIVEN THE LACK OF INVESTMENT IN THE ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE WEST OF THE BANN WHERE THE PROPOSED A5 IMPROVEMENTS ARE NOT DUE FOR COMPLETION UNTIL 2028 (IF NOT FURTHER DELAYED) AND WHERE THERE ISN'T EVEN A DATE FOR THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE A6, THE SPENDING OF A FURTHER £165 MILLION ON BELFAST'S ROADS IS UNJUSTIFIABLE, DOES NOT TARGET SOCIAL NEED, DOES NOT PROMOTE BALANCED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACCORDINGLY DOES NOT PASS EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS.

THE PRIORITY OF STRATEGIC ROADS DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE THE COMPLETION OF THE A6 BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN IN CITIES IN THE STATE AND A5 WESTERN CORRIDOR. ONLY THEN SHOULD ANY FURTHER ROAD DEVELOPMENT HAPPEN IN BELFAST.

Development priorities

The existing junction consists of a signalised gyratory 'box' system with traffic signals at each corner, serving over 100,000 traffic movements per day. It is a source of traffic congestion and requires careful traffic management, particularly in peak periods, to ensure that the gyratory system does not become blocked as this would result in significant traffic delays.

The existing junction is therefore considered a 'bottleneck' on the Strategic Road Network, in accordance with the definition established by the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, i.e.:

"...where localised restrictions cause undue congestion and thereby delay for freight, public transport and cars."

The programme to improve transport links in Northern Ireland has been developed and is based on a series of key documents which include:

- The 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone';
- 'Moving Forward: The Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement' published in 1998;
- 'Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 - Shaping our Future' published in 2002;
- 'Regional Development Strategy 2035 – Building a Better Future' published in 2012;
- 'Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012' published in 2012;
- 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation', published in 2012;
- 'Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015' published in 2005;
- 'Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015' (BMTP) published in 2004;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018;
- Investment Delivery Plan for Roads;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021; and

- Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015;

The Regional Transportation Strategy recognises the importance of removing bottlenecks on the Key Transport Corridors. The bottleneck at the York Street Interchange is identified in the BMTP and the Consultation Document ‘*Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015*’ published in 2006.

Social Need

The Proposed Scheme has been subject to a Section 75 Equality of Opportunity Screening Analysis as part of the scheme development process. Schemes are progressed on the basis of need and the importance of this project in relation to the transport network, Belfast Harbour and the City Airport is recognised by its inclusion on the Trans-European Network.

Priority of Schemes

Subject to satisfactory completion of the Statutory Processes, the ultimate decision regarding timing and relative priority of schemes lies with the Minister for Regional Development.

Inspectors’ Comments (Conor Duffy)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI written responses set out above have been noted.

4.2.3 Objection number	OBJ03
Objectors Name	Fergal Barr
Date submitted.....	29 January 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I AM WRITING TO OPPOSE THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE ON THE BASIS OF COST. THE PROPOSED £125 – 165 MILLION POUND PROJECT DOES NOT REPRESENT VALUE FOR MONEY AT A TIME OF BUDGET CUTS.

Value for Money

A detailed Traffic and Economic assessment has been undertaken using Cost Benefit Analysis (COBA) and Queues and Delays at Roadworks (QUADRO) techniques and computer models, in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, to quantify the effects of the Proposed Scheme. Detailed costs have been prepared and included in the assessment to determine the economic value of the scheme. A range of sensitivity tests has also been undertaken to examine the extent to which results from the computer models vary under different scenarios.

The method adopted for the Traffic and Economic assessment is in line with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The results of the COBA economic assessment, reported in the published Proposed Scheme Report, indicate that the Proposed Scheme represents good value for money with an overall Net Present Value of £99.780m and a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334.

The results of the various sensitivity tests indicate that the Proposed Scheme would generate a positive Net Present Value over a range of test scenarios where the overall benefits exceed the cost of the scheme. It is concluded that the Proposed Scheme would improve operating conditions in the York Street area and represents good value for money.

MORE SERIOUSLY GIVEN THE LACK OF INVESTMENT IN THE ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE WEST OF THE BANN WHERE THE PROPOSED A5 IMPROVEMENTS ARE NOT DUE FOR COMPLETION UNTIL 2028 (IF NOT FURTHER DELAYED) AND WHERE THERE ISN'T EVEN A DATE FOR THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE A6, THE SPENDING OF A FURTHER £165 MILLION ON BELFAST'S ROADS IS UNJUSTIFIABLE, DOES NOT TARGET SOCIAL NEED, DOES NOT PROMOTE BALANCED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACCORDINGLY DOES NOT PASS EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS.

THE PRIORITY OF STRATEGIC ROADS DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE THE COMPLETION OF THE A6 BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN CITIES IN THE STATE AND A5 WESTERN CORRIDOR. ONLY THEN SHOULD ANY FURTHER ROAD DEVELOPMENT HAPPEN IN BELFAST.

Development priorities

The existing junction consists of a signalised gyratory 'box' system with traffic signals at each corner, serving over 100,000 traffic movements per day. It is a source of traffic congestion and requires careful traffic management, particularly in peak periods, to ensure that the gyratory system does not become blocked as this would result in significant traffic delays.

The existing junction is therefore considered a 'bottleneck' on the Strategic Road Network, in accordance with the definition established by the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, i.e.:

"...where localised restrictions cause undue congestion and thereby delay for freight, public transport and cars."

The programme to improve transport links in Northern Ireland has been developed and is based on a series of key documents which include:

- The 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone';
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- 'Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 - Shaping our Future' published in 2002;
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- 'Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012' published in 2012;
- 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation', published in 2012;
- 'Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015' published in 2005;
- 'Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015' (BMTP) published in 2004;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018;
- Investment Delivery Plan for Roads;

- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021; and
- Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015;

The Regional Transportation Strategy recognises the importance of removing bottlenecks on the Key Transport Corridors. The bottleneck at the York Street Interchange is identified in the BMTP and the Consultation Document ‘*Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015*’ published in 2006.

Social Need

The Proposed Scheme has been subject to a Section 75 Equality of Opportunity Screening Analysis as part of the scheme development process. Schemes are progressed on the basis of need and the importance of this project in relation to the transport network, Belfast Harbour and the City Airport is recognised by its inclusion on the Trans-European Network.

Priority of Schemes

Subject to satisfactory completion of the Statutory Processes, the ultimate decision regarding timing and relative priority of schemes lies with the Minister for Regional Development.

Inspectors’ Comments (Fergal Barr)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI written responses set out above have been noted.

4.2.4 Objection number	OBJ04
Objectors Name	Matt Concannon
Date submitted	29 January 2015
NIMVO plot number	Not Applicable

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I AM WRITING TO OPPOSE THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE ON THE BASIS OF COST. THE PROPOSED £125 – 165 MILLION POUND PROJECT DOES NOT REPRESENT VALUE FOR MONEY AT A TIME OF BUDGET CUTS.

Value for Money

A detailed Traffic and Economic assessment has been undertaken using Cost Benefit Analysis (COBA) and Queues and Delays at Roadworks (QUADRO) techniques and computer models, in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, to quantify the effects of the Proposed Scheme. Detailed costs have been prepared and included in the assessment to determine the economic value of the scheme. A range of sensitivity tests has also been undertaken to examine the extent to which results from the computer models vary under different scenarios.

The method adopted for the Traffic and Economic assessment is in line with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The results of the COBA economic assessment, reported in the published Proposed Scheme Report, indicate that the Proposed Scheme represents good value for

money with an overall Net Present Value of £99.780m and a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334.

The results of the various sensitivity tests indicate that the Proposed Scheme would generate a positive Net Present Value over a range of test scenarios where the overall benefits exceed the cost of the scheme. It is concluded that the Proposed Scheme would improve operating conditions in the York Street area and represents good value for money.

MORE SERIOUSLY GIVEN THE LACK OF INVESTMENT IN THE ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE WEST OF THE BANN WHERE THE PROPOSED A5 IMPROVEMENTS ARE NOT DUE FOR COMPLETION UNTIL 2028 (IF NOT FURTHER DELAYED) AND WHERE THERE ISN'T EVEN A DATE FOR THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE A6, THE SPENDING OF A FURTHER £165 MILLION ON BELFAST'S ROADS IS UNJUSTIFIABLE, DOES NOT TARGET SOCIAL NEED, DOES NOT PROMOTE BALANCED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACCORDINGLY DOES NOT PASS EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS.

THE PRIORITY OF STRATEGIC ROADS DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE THE COMPLETION OF THE A6 BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN IN CITIES IN THE STATE AND A5 WESTERN CORRIDOR. ONLY THEN SHOULD ANY FURTHER ROAD DEVELOPMENT HAPPEN IN BELFAST.

Development priorities

The existing junction consists of a signalised gyratory 'box' system with traffic signals at each corner, serving over 100,000 traffic movements per day. It is a source of traffic congestion and requires careful traffic management, particularly in peak periods, to ensure that the gyratory system does not become blocked as this would result in significant traffic delays.

The existing junction is therefore considered a 'bottleneck' on the Strategic Road Network, in accordance with the definition established by the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, i.e.:

'...where localised restrictions cause undue congestion and thereby delay for freight, public transport and cars.'

The programme to improve transport links in Northern Ireland has been developed and is based on a series of key documents which include:

- The 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone';
- 'Moving Forward: The Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement' published in 1998;
- 'Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 - Shaping our Future' published in 2002;
- 'Regional Development Strategy 2035 – Building a Better Future' published in 2012;
- 'Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012' published in 2012;
- 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation', published in 2012;
- 'Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015' published in 2005;
- 'Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015' (BMTP) published in 2004;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015;

- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018;
- Investment Delivery Plan for Roads;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021; and
- Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015;

The Regional Transportation Strategy recognises the importance of removing bottlenecks on the Key Transport Corridors. The bottleneck at the York Street Interchange is identified in the BMTP and the Consultation Document ‘*Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015*’ published in 2006.

Social Need

The Proposed Scheme has been subject to a Section 75 Equality of Opportunity Screening Analysis as part of the scheme development process. Schemes are progressed on the basis of need and the importance of this project in relation to the transport network, Belfast Harbour and the City Airport is recognised by its inclusion on the Trans-European Network.

Priority of Schemes

Subject to satisfactory completion of the Statutory Processes, the ultimate decision regarding timing and relative priority of schemes lies with the Minister for Regional Development.

Inspectors’ Comments (Matt Concannon)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.2.5 Objection number OBJ05
 Objectors Name Atkins Global (On behalf of Vodafone)
 Date submitted 06 February 2015
 NIMVO plot number N/A

The objections from Atkins Global (On behalf of Vodafone) were withdrawn prior to the start of the Inquiry

4.2.6 Objection number OBJ06A and OBJ06B
 Objectors Name Paul O’Neill (Ashton Community Trust)
 Date submitted 12 February 2015
 NIMVO plot number Not Applicable

Objection number OBJ06A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

WE ARE A GROUP OF RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS LIVING AND WORKING WITHIN THE GREATER NEW LODGE /NORTH QUEEN STREET AREA OF NORTH BELFAST. OUR GROUP WAS FORMED FOLLOWING PUBLIC MEETINGS AT CLIFTON HOUSE, TUESDAY 23RD SEPT 2014 AND NORTH QUEEN STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE 13TH OF OCTOBER. (SEE ATTACHED CLIPPINGS FROM GREATER NEW LODGE COMMUNITY MAGAZINE)

AS YOU ARE AWARE THE PLANS FOR YORK STREET INTERCHANGE HAVE GONE OUT TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION, WE WOULD LIKE TO RAISE A NUMBER OF POINTS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

ALTHOUGH STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY TRANSPORT NI RELATING TO THE "IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC INPUT", TO DATE THE RESIDENTS LIVING IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ARE STILL VERY MUCH IN THE DARK AS TO HOW THIS WILL IMPACT ON THEIR LIVES AND GENERAL LIVING CONDITIONS. BASED ON OUR OWN LOCAL ENGAGEMENT, RESIDENTS HAVE INFORMED US THAT THEY HAVE NEVER RECEIVED ANY FORM OF COMMUNICATION FROM ANY OF THE DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT.

OVER THE PAST NUMBER OF MONTHS WE HAVE RAISED CONCERNS IN THE FORM OF A LETTER SENT TO THE DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED MOTORWAY CHANGE. THIS WAS SENT ON OUR BEHALF BY MARK HACKETT OF THE FORUM FOR ALTERNATIVE BELFAST. (SEE ATTACHED). WE HAVE ALSO SPOKEN IN PERSON TO DRD AND TRANSPORT NI OFFICIALS (CLIFTON HOUSE, TUESDAY 23RD SEPT 2014). HOWEVER WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY SIGNIFICANT RESPONSE.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM OUR GROUP ATTENDED THE 'YORK STREET INTERCHANGE ORDERS EXHIBITION' ON MONDAY 9TH OF FEBRUARY 2015 IN THE RAMADA HOTEL BELFAST AND INDEED HANDED IN THIS LETTER TO THE OFFICIALS THERE. HOWEVER WE FEEL THAT GIVEN THE GRAVITY OF THIS PROJECT AND ITS POTENTIALLY ENORMOUS LIFE CHANGING IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY THAT A MORE INTENSIVE AND MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE IS REQUIRED BETWEEN ALL STAKEHOLDERS. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE RESIDENTS, ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES, SENIOR ENGINEERS AND ALL RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS. TO ENSURE THAT THIS DIALOGUE PROCESS IS FLEXIBLE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE IT SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT COMMUNITY LEVEL.

WE FULLY UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE LONG TERM STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW ROAD DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF SHARED DECISION-MAKING TO ENSURE THAT THIS PROJECT WILL NOT UNDULY UNDERMINE THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

Communications

Communications to date have been undertaken in accordance with the project Communications Plan, a copy of which was included in Volume 2 (Appendix 6, Annex 4) of the Environmental Statement.

This plan included a programme of consultation with project stakeholders, including residents of the area and Ashton Community Trust, at appropriate points in the development of the road scheme to date.

This process included a public consultation in June 2011 and Orders Exhibition in February 2015, and the prior distribution of over 30,000 flyers to addresses in the area (Postcode sectors: BT13 1; BT14 6; BT3 9; BT1 1, 2 and 3; and BT15 1, 2 and

On both occasions, these flyer drops were supplemented with hand delivered letters from TransportNI for properties immediately adjacent to the Proposed Scheme. The public consultation events were advertised in local press, with widespread TV and radio coverage. TransportNI also wrote specifically to key stakeholders, including the residents of Little Georges Street, Molyneaux Street and the Ashton Community Trust to invite them to attend the consultation events. Furthermore, an exhibition of the scheme was held at Cityside Retail Park following announcement of the preferred option for the scheme in December 2012.

We would note that further to receiving this letter, we have further engaged directly with representatives of Ashton Community Trust on two separate occasions to discuss the Proposed Scheme.

Ongoing dialogue

TransportNI is content to meet with local representatives to illustrate, explain and discuss impacts, which would include any proposed mitigation measures. Moreover, a community liaison officer would be appointed for the duration of the works.

GIVEN THAT THIS PROJECT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY AFFECT IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER THE HEALTH AND WELL BEING OF OUR COMMUNITY, DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS AND MAINTAINING AN ONGOING DIALOGUE WITH LOCAL PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES IS CRUCIAL. USING THE INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM THIS DIALOGUE WOULD HELP INFLUENCE AND HELP SHAPE THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN SUCH A WAY AS TO ACHIEVE THE OPTIMUM OUTCOMES FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

Ongoing dialogue

TransportNI is content to meet with local representatives to illustrate, explain and discuss impacts, which would include any proposed mitigation measures. Moreover, a community liaison officer would be appointed for the duration of the works.

QUOTE "TRANSPORT NI RECOGNISES THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC INPUT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAJOR ROAD SCHEMES AND HOLDS PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS AT KEY STAGES TO INFORM AND TO FACILITATE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN ITS DECISION MAKING PROCESS. KEY OBJECTIVES OF UNDERTAKING COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT ARE:

- **TO ENSURE COMMUNITIES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS ARE PROVIDED WITH SUFFICIENT, TIMELY INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHEME**
- **TO ENSURE THAT DECISION MAKING IS INCLUSIVE OF DIVERSE COMMUNITY IDEAS AND OPINIONS**
- **TO ENSURE THAT PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF THE PROJECT MEETS THE 'BALANCE OF COMMUNITY' NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS**
- **TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY**
- **TO BUILD CONSTRUCTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITIES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS".**

We would respectfully request that you instruct all relevant officials to commence a meaningful dialogue with us as outlined in this letter.

Ongoing dialogue

TransportNI is content to meet with local representatives to illustrate, explain and discuss impacts, which would include any proposed mitigation measures. Moreover, a community liaison officer would be appointed for the duration of the works.

Objection number - OBJ06B

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

PLEASE TREAT THIS AS A FORMAL SUBMISSION IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

WE ARE A GROUP OF RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS LIVING AND WORKING WITHIN THE GREATER NEW LODGE /NORTH QUEEN STREET AREA OF NORTH BELFAST. OUR GROUP WAS FORMED FOLLOWING PUBLIC MEETINGS AT CLIFTON HOUSE, TUESDAY 23RD SEPT AND NORTH QUEEN STREET COMMUNITY CENTRE 13TH OF OCTOBER.

WE WOULD LIKE TO RAISE A NUMBER OF POINTS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. OVER THE PAST NUMBER OF MONTHS WE HAVE RAISED THESE CONCERNS IN THE FORM OF A LETTER SENT TO THE DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED MOTORWAY CHANGE. WE HAVE ALSO SPOKEN IN PERSON TO DRD /TRANSPORT NI AND URS OFFICIALS AT;

- **CLIFTON HOUSE, TUESDAY 23RD SEPT 2014**
- **YORK STREET INTERCHANGE ORDERS EXHIBITION' IN THE RAMADA HOTEL BELFAST ON 9TH FEBRUARY 2015**
- **NORTH QUEEN STREET PARK PLAY CENTRE WEDNESDAY MARCH 4TH 2015.**

WE FULLY UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE LONG TERM STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW ROAD DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF SHARED DECISION-MAKING TO ENSURE THAT THIS PROJECT WILL NOT UNDULY UNDERMINE THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY. GIVEN THE GRAVITY OF THIS PROJECT AND ITS POTENTIALLY LIFE CHANGING IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY WE FEEL THAT THE POINTS RAISED IN THIS SUBMISSION SHOULD BE GIVEN THE FULLEST CONSIDERATION.

RESIDENTS HAVE SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT THE INEVITABLE DISRUPTION DURING CONSTRUCTION. THEY HAVE WORRIES ABOUT POTENTIAL EVENING, NIGHT AND WEEKEND WORKING. WE BELIEVE THAT THE IMPACTS AT STREET LEVEL SHOULD BE CLEARLY ILLUSTRATED, EXPLAINED AND DISCUSSED AND MITIGATION MEASURES AGREED IN ADVANCE WITH THE COMMUNITY.

Construction disruption

Construction-related impacts and overall buildability issues are given very careful consideration by TransportNI. Section 4.7 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement (ES) details the proposed construction sequence and construction programme. Construction-related impacts are also assessed and mitigation proposed in each of the technical chapters (Chapters 8 to 17) in Volume 1 of the ES. Moreover, in line with the guidance contained within Interim Advice Note 183/14, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has been prepared for the Proposed Scheme and is contained within Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the ES. The EMP forms an outline plan and is closely aligned with the design and assessment process contained within Part II of the ES (Chapters 8 to 17). The EMP would be further refined and expanded by the appointed Contractor into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as more information becomes available and there is more certainty in terms of the proposed layout, construction methods, programme and the likely environmental effects.

An indication of likely working hours is outlined in Section 3.1 of the EMP (Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the ES). This section states that during night working, the Contractor shall not undertake operations likely to result in significant disturbance at nearby sensitive receptors (as illustrated on Figure 13.1 in Volume 3 of the ES) and residential properties, including, but not limited to, Little Georges Street, North Queen Street and Molyneaux Street. Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit has powers under the Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978 to impose requirements as to the times during which work may be carried out and the methods of work to be used.

Ongoing dialogue

TransportNI is content to meet with local representatives to illustrate, explain and discuss impacts, which would include any proposed mitigation measures. Moreover, a community liaison officer would be appointed for the duration of the works.

IN RELATION TO HOUSES AT LITTLE GEORGES STREET, OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE RETAINING WALL TO THE REAR OF HOUSES IS TO BE EXTENDED UPWARDS AND THE CARRIAGEWAY MOVED TOWARDS SOME HOUSES. IT SEEMS THAT EXISTING SCREENING LANDSCAPE WILL BE REMOVED. THERE IS NO INDICATION OF SAFETY, VISUAL SCREENING (LANDSCAPE) AND SOUND SCREENING PROPOSED.

Retaining wall Clarification

No works are planned to increase the height of the existing retaining walls along the back of the Little Georges Street properties. It is however proposed to steepen the existing embankment to accommodate an increase in carriageway width. The existing landscaping would be removed for construction purposes. TransportNI notes that Table 4.1 in Volume 1 of the published ES provides a full list of drawings that illustrate the Proposed Scheme and would specifically highlight drawing YSI-URS-XX-XX-DR-RE-EW201 that illustrates the proposed retaining solution. These drawings are contained within the separately published Volume 3 of Part 2 of the Proposed Scheme Report (the Engineering, Traffic and Economic Assessment Report).

Safety

TransportNI notes that Table 4.1 in Volume 1 of the published ES lists drawings (YSI-URS-XX-XX-DR-RE-RR101) that illustrate where vehicle restraint systems (safety barriers) are proposed, including along the edge of the widened embankment adjacent to the houses in question. Table 4.1 also identifies the specific drawings that highlight the proposals for landscaping and drawings identified where noise barriers would be located. These drawings are contained within the separately published Volume 3 of Part 2 of the Proposed Scheme Report (the Engineering, Traffic and Economic Assessment Report).

Road safety is addressed within the design by completing a formal Road Safety Audit process. This process is undertaken in accordance with Standard HD 19 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). This has required the completion of a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit by an independent audit team, led by a qualified and experienced Road Safety Auditor. This audit included a review of all reported road traffic collision data within the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme to identify associated trends. The proposed vehicle restraint systems along the verges of the Westlink have been considered as part of the audit process and the Road Safety Auditor has not made any further recommendations in this respect.

- **ANY SOUND AND SAFETY SCREENING IS LIKELY TO ADD TO THE OBSTRUCTION CAUSED BY THE RAISING OF THE NEW RETAINING**

WALLS WHICH LIE TO THE SOUTH (SUNLIGHT) ASPECT OF THE HOUSING.

- **NO COMPENSATION MEASURES SUCH AS ACOUSTIC GLAZING ARE BEING PROPOSED.**
- **NO LANDSCAPE PLAN FOR EACH HOUSE IN MITIGATION IS PROVIDED.**
- **THERE ARE CONCERNS OVER HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S PLAY IN GARDENS.**
- **THE RESIDENTS HAVE AN ESTABLISHED LEGAL 'RIGHT TO LIGHT'.**

Light

TransportNI has completed a Daylight assessment of the Proposed Scheme to determine the impacts, if any, on the adjacent residential properties at North Queen Street, Little Georges Street and Molyneaux Street. The assessment has shown that all living rooms, which are the only occupied rooms of the existing buildings that are affected by the Proposed Scheme, would still enjoy adequate daylight after the Proposed Scheme is in place.

Health

An Air Quality assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 8 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 8.7 of the ES. During the operational phase of the Proposed Scheme, no predicted exceedances of the national objective limit values are expected, thus there would be no significant effects on air quality. Therefore, no specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

Visual

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment along the edge of the scheme in the vicinity of Little George's Street is included in these drawings (Sheets 2 & 3). The detailed planting schedule would be developed as the scheme design progresses.

Noise

A Noise & Vibration assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 13 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 13.7 of the ES, which includes the approximate length and height of proposed acoustic barriers along part of the Westlink. An indicative location for the proposed acoustic barrier along the Westlink, in the vicinity of Little George's Street, is shown on Figure 13.3 and on Figure 11.7 (Sheets 2 & 3) in Volume 3 of the ES.

Thin Surface Course System (TSCS), otherwise known as low noise surfacing, would also be provided on interchange links between Westlink, M2 and M3, and the slip roads from these to the local road network. Whilst the noise benefits of this surfacing are mainly evident at higher speeds, there would be some benefits at the lower speeds on the Proposed Scheme. However, no correction for the low noise surfacing has been included in the calculations and, hence, the noise assessment is a worst-case scenario.

With this mitigation in place, properties in Little Georges Street are predicted to experience decreases in noise levels with the Proposed Scheme in operation, as shown on Figures 13.3 and 13.4 of the ES.

The results of the noise impact assessment indicate that no properties would qualify for noise insulation, under the terms of the Noise Insulation Regulations (Northern Ireland 1995).

THE WIDENED MOTORWAY IS ONLY 10 METRES AWAY FROM EXISTING HOUSES, THE TRAFFIC IS BEING MOVED ONE LANE CLOSER TO SOME HOUSES, ESSENTIALLY THESE ISSUES ARE A 'CATCH 22' FOR THE DESIGNERS; ANY VISUAL, SAFETY AND SOUND MITIGATION MEASURES WILL ONLY ADD TO THE OBSTRUCTION EFFECT OF THE NEW RETAINING WALL CUTTING OUT SOUTHERN LIGHT RIGHTS TO EXISTING HOUSING. THE RE-HOUSING AND COMPENSATION OF RESIDENTS ON THIS STREET SHOULD BE OPEN FOR DISCUSSION.

Conflict between mitigation measures

The provisions for safety, noise mitigation and visual impact are considered appropriate by the design team. The daylight assessment has determined that all living rooms in these properties would still enjoy adequate levels of daylight. TransportNI is content that any potential conflict has been properly addressed.

Rehousing and compensation

Where applicable, compensation would be offered in accordance with the provisions of the relevant legislation (Land Acquisition and Compensation (NI) Order 1973). No residential properties at Little Georges Street, Molyneaux Street or North Queen Street adjacent to the Proposed Scheme have been identified for inclusion within the draft Vesting Order.

Part II of the Land Acquisition and Compensation (NI) Order 1973 includes a right to compensation for reduction in value caused by the use of public works.

Ongoing dialogue

TransportNI is content to meet with local representatives to illustrate, explain and discuss impacts, which would include any proposed mitigation measures. Moreover, a community liaison officer would be appointed for the duration of the works.

THERE IS A PARADE INTERFACE AT THE BOTTOM OF HENRY STREET/YORK ROAD PROPOSED BRIDGE. RESIDENTS HIGHLIGHTED THAT THE CURRENT SCREEN, WALL AND FENCES ARE PART OF AN INTERFACE DURING PARADES WHERE A DOJ PROJECT IS ONGOING. THE RAISED APPROACH ROAD TO THE YORK ROAD OVERPASS WILL CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE LAYOUT. RESIDENTS SUGGEST THAT THE ISSUE IS ADDRESSED WITH LOCAL INVOLVEMENT AND WITH REFERENCE TO WORK WITH EXISTING AGENCIES SUCH AS DOJ AND LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE.

Parade Interface

TransportNI and their consultants have engaged with residents, the Department of Justice and the Police Service of Northern Ireland with regard to the existing interface. Discussions included the provision of direct connection between Henry Street and the York Street footway (via steps) and the edge treatment to the elevated footway itself. It is accepted that appropriate consultation should be undertaken for this aspect of the detailed design in due course.

NOISE AND AIR POLLUTION LOCALLY. WHILST THE INTERCHANGE MAY REDUCE THESE ISSUES ON A WIDER SCALE LOCAL RESIDENTS HAVE RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT LONG TERM EXPOSURE PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO THE EXISTING HOUSES 10 METRES AWAY FROM THE ELEVATED CARRIAGEWAY AND IN THE AREA AROUND THE FORMER NORTH QUEEN STREET BARRACKS SITE WITH REFERENCE TO THE NEW HOUSING PROJECT WHICH IS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION THERE.

Noise

A Noise & Vibration assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 13 in Volume 1 of the ES. This assessment included consideration of committed development and properties currently under construction. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 13.7 of the ES, which includes the approximate length and height of proposed acoustic barriers along part of the Westlink. An indicative location for the proposed acoustic barrier along the Westlink, in the vicinity of Little Georges Street, is shown on Figure 13.3 and on Figure 11.7 (Sheets 2 & 3) in Volume 3 of the ES.

With the mitigation detailed above, properties in Little Georges Street are predicted to experience decreases in noise levels with the Proposed Scheme in operation, as shown in Figures 13.3 and 13.4 of the ES.

Regarding the area around the former North Queen Street Barracks site, currently being developed for residential use (Application Z/2013/0615/F), noise level changes across this area are predicted to range from negligible reductions to negligible increases as a result of the operation of the Proposed Scheme, as shown in Figures 13.3 and 13.4 of the ES.

Air pollution

An Air Quality assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 8 in Volume 1 of the ES. Changes in annual mean pollutant concentrations at a selection of representative receptors (which includes the Little Georges Street / North Queen Street area) for the Opening Year (2021) and the Design Year (2035) between the Do-Minimum and Do-Something scenarios are shown in Tables 8.19 and 8.21 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 8.7 of the ES. During the operational phase of the Proposed Scheme, no predicted exceedances of the national objective limit values are expected, thus there would be no significant effects on air quality. Therefore, no specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

MCGURK'S BAR MEMORIAL SITE. DRD WILL BE AWARE OF THE MCGURK'S BAR MEMORIALS. THE ROAD WAS BUILT OVER THIS SITE. THE CURRENT PROPOSAL INDICATES A COMPLETELY REBUILT WALL AND WIDENED FLYOVER SOME 5-6 METRES OVER THE MEMORIALS. THE TRAUMATIC IMPACT AND ENDURING LEGACY OF THE MCGURK'S BAR BOMBING ON THE FAMILIES OF THOSE KILLED AND INDEED ON THE GENERAL NEW LODGE COMMUNITY CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. THE ENDURING EMOTIONAL AND SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS MEMORIAL SITE IS OF HUGE IMPORTANCE. WE THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT ANY PROCESS RELATING TO THE MEMORIAL SITE MUST BE DONE WITH THE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT AND AGREEMENT OF THE RELATIVES OF THOSE KILLED IN MCGURK'S BAR.

McGurk's Bar Memorial

TransportNI have already met with representatives of the victims' families of the McGurk's Bar bombing. The necessary removal of the existing memorials would be undertaken sensitively, having taken into account any relevant representations.

UNDERCROFT AND EXTENSION OF NORTH QUEEN STREET BRIDGE UNDERPASS INCLUDING RAMPS AND BLIGHTED LANDS ADJACENT. SOME YEARS AGO A NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP WORKED UP PROPOSALS AT THE PEDESTRIAN RAMPS AND LANDS ADJACENT TO THE NORTH QUEEN

STREET FLYOVER. THESE BLIGHTED LANDS EXIST FROM THE EARLIER ROAD BUILDING OF THE WESTLINK.

THE LEFT OVER AREA IS NOT VISUALLY SECURE OR SAFE, AND THE RAMP WALLS GIVE COVER TO ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND STONE THROWING ONTO NORTH QUEEN STREET. THE PROPOSALS CREATE A NEW SIMILAR UNRESOLVED SPACE TOWARDS THE NEW HOUSING SITE AT THE FORMER PSNI STATION. THE INTERCHANGE PROJECT NEEDS TO INCLUDE ADDRESSING THE BLIGHTED SPACES AND STRIPS OF LAND CAUSED BY THE ROAD. THIS SHOULD BE CO-DESIGNED WITH LOCAL GROUPS WHO UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT FROM EXPERIENCE.

NORTH QUEEN STREET FLYOVER. THE FLYOVER IS TO BE WIDENED. CURRENTLY IT IS A DARK UNIMAGINATIVE SPACE THAT BLIGHTS INVESTMENT AND AMENITY FOR WIDER INNER NORTH BELFAST. THE DESIGN, MATERIALS AND LIGHTING OF THE SPACE UNDER AND THE FENCE OVER THE BRIDGE NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED AND CO-DESIGNED WITH THE COMMUNITY AND WIDER CIVIC INTERESTS, WITH PUBLIC SPACE THAT IS OF HIGH QUALITY AND CIVIC.

Landscape Treatment

TransportNI concurs that treatment of the North Queen Street bridge area would require careful consideration as the scheme design progresses.

Based on the Landscape & Visual assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment in the vicinity of North Queen Street bridge is included in these drawings (Sheet 2). This includes proposed enhanced lighting under the bridge, and proposed woodland screen planting adjacent to the new housing site at the former PSNI station.

Strategic Advisory Group

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report, including the ES, TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation.

North Queen Street Bridge

The extension of the North Queen Street bridge is a matter which the SAG has considered. The group has endorsed the provision of feature lighting to the undercroft area, use of Aluminum Composite Material (ACM) graphics panels on the existing abutments (designed with local community input) and decorative acoustic barriers along the edge of the structure on both elevations on the Westlink.

During the consultation referred to above with the Department of Justice and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the existing steps and ramps to the north-west corner of the bridge were discussed. It was confirmed that the area had benefitted from an improvement scheme to address known anti-social behaviour in this location. It is understood that this scheme has been successful in this regard. TransportNI can confirm that the Proposed Scheme would not significantly impact the existing arrangement.

The detailed design of the embankment to the south-west corner of the widened North Queen Street bridge would ensure access is only possible from the Westlink carriageway.

Ongoing dialogue

TransportNI is content to meet with local representatives to illustrate, explain and discuss impacts, which would include any proposed mitigation measures. Moreover, a community liaison officer would be appointed for the duration of the works.

TRAFFIC SYSTEM APPROACH TO THOMAS STREET THIS GROUP OF HOUSES EXISTS OFF A ONE WAY SYSTEM AND HAS ONLY ONE WAY IN/OUT. THE ARRANGEMENT IS ALREADY AWKWARD FOR RESIDENTS. CONCERNS WERE RAISED ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE WERE ACCESS MAY BE FURTHER RESTRICTED AND DIVERTED TRAFFIC CAUSING INCREASED DISRUPTION. FEARS OF NOISE, AMENITY DISTURBANCE AND DRAINAGE DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE IN PARTICULAR WERE ALSO EXPRESSED. THE STREET IS CURRENTLY SCREENED BY PLANTING, CONCERN THAT THIS WILL BE LOST AND NOT REPLACED.

Access/Disruption

Construction of the Proposed Scheme would require restrictions on all traffic movements in the area, including Thomas Street. TransportNI is developing a Temporary Traffic Management Strategy for this scheme, in consultation with the emergency services and the local community, to ensure that access is maintained to all existing residential and commercial properties and to minimise disruption on adjacent routes. All traffic management proposals presented by the appointed Contractor would be subject to approval by TransportNI prior to their implementation.

Construction Noise

TransportNI accepts that there would be an increase in noise levels during the construction phase of the Proposed Scheme. The assessment of this impact is described in Section 13.6.2 in Volume 1 of the ES. There are a number of mitigation measures which shall be implemented during the works to limit this impact, as discussed in Section 13.7.2 in Volume 1 of the ES. The Contractor would be required to comply with BS5228 (Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites). These guidelines shall form the basis of control and limiting potential impact to noise sensitive receptors.

Construction Amenity

TransportNI accepts that there would be an inevitable perceived disturbance to amenity during the construction phase of the Proposed Scheme, due to transient changes in air quality, noise, visual impact, and local vehicle movements for example. The assessment of these construction-related impacts is described in the various technical chapters in Volume 1 of the ES. There are a number of mitigation measures which shall be implemented during the works to limit these impacts, as discussed in the respective Mitigation & Enhancement Measures section of those various technical chapters.

Construction-related impacts and overall buildability issues are given very careful consideration by TransportNI. Section 4.7 in Volume 1 of the ES details the proposed construction sequence and construction programme. Moreover, in line with the guidance contained within Interim Advice Note 183/14, and Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has been prepared for the Proposed Scheme and is contained within Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the ES. The EMP forms an outline plan and is closely aligned with the design and assessment process contained within Part II of the ES (Chapters 7 to 17). The EMP would be further refined and expanded by the appointed Contractor into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as more information becomes available and there is more certainty in terms of the proposed layout, construction methods, programme and the likely environmental effects.

Drainage

The appointed contractor would be required to maintain the operation of the existing storm and foul drainage systems in the area during construction of the Proposed Scheme.

Planting Loss

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment along the edge of the scheme in the vicinity of Great Georges Street / Thomas Street is included in these drawings (Sheet 3). This proposes street trees and a grassed strip. The detailed planting schedule would be developed as the scheme design progresses.

EQUITY AND COMPENSATORY PROJECTS. THE INTERCHANGE IS SUGGESTED TO BE OF REGIONAL IMPORTANCE FOR DRD EXTENDING THROUGHOUT THE EAST COAST BETWEEN PORTS AND TRUNK ROUTES. THE PROJECT HAS, AS DRAWN, LARGE NEGATIVE IMPACTS BOTH AT A PERSONAL STREET SCALE AND FOR THE WIDER NEIGHBOURHOODS. ALONG THE ROUTE, IT IS OUR COMMUNITY THAT SUFFERS SEVERE NEGATIVE IMPACTS WITHOUT ANY SENSE OF EQUITY AND COMPENSATORY MEASURES IN AMENITY. IN THE REGION WE OBSERVE RURAL AND URBAN AREAS WHERE ROADS ARE SCREENED WITH LARGE AREAS OF CAREFUL TREE PLANTING, STONE WALLS (SUCH AS THE ROAD THROUGH CULTRA) ALONG WITH ROUNDABOUTS AND URBAN APPROACHES WHERE LARGE INVESTMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE IN VISUAL AMENITY. WE BELIEVE THE SAME APPROACH MUST BE TAKEN IN OUR AREA. COMPENSATORY PROJECTS SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN IN A CO-DESIGN APPROACH THAT CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THAT OUR AREA HAS BEEN RESPECTED AND TREATED IN A EQUABLE MANNER WITH THE EXPENDITURE OF SUCH A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF PUBLIC FUNDS.

Visual Amenity

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment along the edge of the scheme is included in these drawings. The detailed planting schedule would be developed as the scheme design progresses.

Strategic Advisory Group

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report (including the Environmental Statement) TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation.

Ongoing dialogue

TransportNI is content to meet with local representatives to illustrate, explain and discuss impacts, which would include any proposed mitigation measures. Moreover, a community liaison officer would be appointed for the duration of the works. However, TransportNI is not empowered to fund community projects on an *ad hoc* basis.

Paul O'Neill, Chairperson of the Motorway Interchange Community Working Group and Community Development Coordinator, Ashton Community Trust, spoke at the Inquiry in the afternoon of Day 1.

His presentation is recorded in full in this Report as follows.

'Introduction - My name is Paul O'Neill I am Community Development Coordinator with Ashton Community Trust.

Ashton Community Trust is a Social Enterprise and Development Trust that employs 170 people, owns buildings and facilities in ten separate locations, operates services throughout North Belfast and has made a considerable contribution to the physical regeneration of the local area including interface areas that were once derelict.

North Belfast - North Belfast contains some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in NI and has struggled to attract investment. Poor physical environment is one reason that underpins this problem. Communities are highly segregated along religious and political lines with physical severance and disconnection clearly visible. However, planning and design decisions have also contributed to the physical exclusion and barrier effect that exists. For example there are very few easily walkable approaches into and out of the north part of the city and North Queen Street where the motorway underpass is situated is one of these walkable approaches.

Current Developments - It should also be noted that other large redevelopments are already taking place or are being planned nearby. This includes the new University of Ulster Campus, the Streets Ahead and Northside schemes. However thus far we have no evidence that any resources are being concentrated into making public realm improvements that would create street links to effectively connect our neighbourhood with these developments. We would argue that the Motorway Interchange project, if managed in a manner that takes into serious consideration the needs of the local community, could perhaps help or at least not exacerbate this situation.

We would argue that by creating improved connections and access to the wider commercial and civic life of the city this would enhance confidence and life opportunities for people in inner city neighbourhoods such as ours. It would also create a more visually appealing and inspiring inner city living environment. It is from this perspective that we approach the Motorway Interchange project.

Local Residents Group

I act as Chairperson of a local residents group that was formed to engage with all relevant authorities about the Motorway Interchange scheme. Our group has already raised a number of issues in written submission to the consultation and I would like to concentrate on two particular aspects of this.

North Queen Street Steps, Ramp and the Walkway along the Westlink has been the site for persistent anti-social behaviour for many years. Missiles have been used to attack traffic, the police and individuals walking on this city arterial route. Individuals walking alone have been physically assaulted and there has been fire setting, dumping and problems with graffiti, even elderly people going to mass at nearby St. Patricks Chapel have been attacked. The problematic nature of the space is caused by the physical layout including its proximity to the Westlink. This space in effect provides a hiding place and gathering point for anti-social elements and most local people avoid it at night time.

Over the past ten years there have been ongoing engagements with statutory bodies to try to resolve this problem including workshop processes involving local residents. However a failure to commit the necessary resources to redesign the area has meant that apart from some local art projects and some minor repairs the problems

at this site have not been effectively addressed and have persisted to the present. Given that there will be a considerable amount of reconstruction and disruption with the new Interchange project which is in immediate proximity to this site we believe this provides an important opportunity for TNI to work in cooperation with the other agencies (on the Strategic Advisory Group) and alongside the local community to finally address and to correct these problems.

In their reply to our submission TNI seem to be suggesting that because of a recent improvement scheme (a new mural which it should be noted was initiated by the local community) nothing else needs to be done. The reality is that this most recent improvement is just one in a long line of improvised initiatives which have failed to correct this problem on a long term basis. This can be confirmed by residents, local elected representatives and neighbourhood police. We believe that TNI should commit to work with the local community to address the problems outlined given the fact that work to widen the bridge will actually occur in this immediate proximity.

North Queen Street Underpass - Just a short distance away on North Queen Street is the motorway underpass which is set to widen by a further 8 metres as a result of the new scheme. This feature is currently very foreboding, dark, shabby and unwelcoming. We understand there will be some lighting and surface treatment to mitigate the dark tunnel effect. TNI have indicated that they will work with the local community on this.

However the other issues nearby (already mentioned) will continue to add to the general negative environment if left unaddressed. Ultimately, we need all of these issues to be resolved in an inter-connected way to overcome the problems and create a new, safe, bright and welcoming space at this important gateway to North Belfast.

Mitigation Projects - We feel that mitigating measures, agreed in consultation and with the meaningful participation of the local community are crucial to ensure that the York Street Interchange actually provides tangible improvements. Given that the project is £130-150m and that considerable disruption will occur for local residents we would argue that in advance of the York Street Interchange implementation; measures to compensate the area, minimise the negative impacts and potentially strategically improve the chances for social and economic development in North Belfast should be put in place. We would request that a general planning session be initiated by the design and build contractor including a scoping exercise of the area. This should be conducted with the involvement of local residents, community and elected representatives and relevant statutory authorities.'

Responding for TNI, Mr Spiers said that they had made significant efforts to meet with the local community throughout the design process, in order to discuss the impact of the road proposals. TNI would continue to work with the local people to try to resolve any specific issues.

He added that whilst regeneration was not within the remit of his Department, nothing was being done to prevent regeneration. One of the aims of the Scheme was to make sure that other Government Departments were facilitated to undertake their own regeneration projects for the whole local area.

Mr Spiers went on to say that TNI could not take on board issues from Belfast City Council, the Department for Social Development or the planning Authorities and he emphasised again that his team would do nothing to prevent other Departments from taking their own plans forward.

Commenting on a point made by Mr O'Neill, Mr Megarry said that the proposal was to widen North Queen Street Bridge by 2.7 metres on the southern side and about

4.5 metres on the northern side. This meant that there would be some widening on both sides of this structure.

With regards to ascetics, Mr Megarry made the point that this had been considered by the Strategic Advisory Group. TNI was committed to try to enliven the environment of North Queen Street Bridge mainly in the form of aluminium composite panels to provide more colour in the area. It was envisaged that this work would be undertaken in conjunction with local communities such as schools so that younger people would be able to make a contribution to the eventual overall appearance.

TNI was also committed to providing featured lighting under the bridge and a decorative acoustic barrier on the top.

Turning to the issue of the steps located on the northern side of the bridge, Mr Megarry said that the TNI proposals would not require any alteration to this structure so no changes to it had been planned. TNI wanted to avoid 'mission creep'. Discussions had taken place with the Department of Justice and local community policing staff. Improvements had been made to the steps area, some of which had been carried out by local people and feedback on the day of the consultation had been that the work had been effective to some degree.

Mr O'Neill said that every Department he speak to talks about 'mission creep'. Blunder after blunder continues, bad money is thrown after good and inevitably more money will be spent on the problem of the steps if it is not addressed. Departments needed to start working together at a high level. Something in the order of four different Departments have responsibility for the area of the steps and attempting to have the problems resolved was frustrating.

Mr O'Neill went on to quote the views of the local PSNI Neighbourhood Sergeant as follows.

'Despite the best efforts of the police community to deal with this issue, with some success, I honestly believe that a focused long term solution is required to redesign out crime with community support and with the new overpass in an area where there need to be an urgency to look at collective approaches by all Agencies to ensure that this does not remain a potential to become a more difficult anti-social hot-spot'.

Mr O'Neill pointed out that this was coming from someone working at the 'coalface' and again stressed the need for a collective approach to the problems.

Mr Spiers came back to say that there had been a discussion within TNI recently which had revealed that the proposed alteration to the bridge might have some impact on the actual steps. It was possible that they might be able to do something in that area which could include the removal of the steps. Mr Spiers undertook to look at the possibilities sympathetically.

Mr McGuinness initiated a very short discussion on what would happen if in future, the lack of pedestrian access prevented a traditional parade from using York Street. There was general agreement that using North Queen Street as an alternative route would be totally unacceptable to everyone concerned.

Inspectors' Comments Paul O'Neill (Ashton Community Trust)

See Section 7.5 - Inspectors' Considerations – Impact of the Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas.

Inspectors' Recommendations Paul O'Neill (Ashton Community Trust)

See Section 8.2 – Inspectors' Recommendations – Impact of the Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas

4.2.7 Objection number..... **OBJ07**
Objectors Name..... Paschal Lynch
Date submitted..... 02 March 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I WOULD LIKE TO LOG IN WRITING MY FORMAL OBJECTION AGAINST THE CURRENT PROPOSAL FOR YORK STREET INTERCHANGE BEFORE THE 10TH MARCH 2015.

I HAVE MET ROY SPIERS AND WE ARE CURRENTLY ORGANISING SOME MORE TIME.

WITHIN OUR LAST MEETING I ARTICULATED THE BENEFIT OF ANOTHER IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY.

I HAVE DONE FURTHER RESEARCH AND I HAVE DETERMINED MY IMPROVEMENTS OUT PERFORM THE CURRENT PROPOSAL BOTH IN TERMS OF OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE.

MY IMPROVEMENTS COULD ALSO BE ROLLED OUT WITHIN THIS YEAR – 5 YEARS AHEAD OF THE URS PROPOSAL.

ROY CANNOT GO INTO THE DETAIL OF MY OPPORTUNITY AS HE HAS SIGNED A NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT BUT HIS MAIN RESISTANCE WAS BASED ON FEELING; I CAN ARTICULATE THE BENEFITS MATHEMATICALLY AND I AM PREPARED TO GET PAID BASED ON THE FLOW PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT.

I WOULD LIKE A FOLLOW UP MEETING AT A SENIOR LEVEL TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER IN MORE DETAIL.

TransportNI has commissioned its consultants, URS, to assess your proposal in terms of operational and safety performance (and other aspects). A report has been prepared by URS detailing their findings. This report will be submitted to the Inspectors for their consideration.

On the basis of URS' assessment, TransportNI is content that your proposal does not outperform the Proposed Scheme for the following reasons:

- Based on the conclusions from completed traffic, engineering and environmental assessments, it is considered that the proposal fails to meet several of the stated scheme objectives in relation to improved access to the regional gateways, maintaining access for non-motorised users, and maintaining access to existing residential properties and businesses.
- The proposal, through the re-routing of significant volumes of traffic onto streets in residential areas and importantly, within a defined Air Quality Management Area, is expected to meet with significant resistance from the affected local communities of North Belfast.
- The proposal's changes to junctions and potential lane configurations raise concerns for road user safety, as they have not been designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and have not been subject to the Road Safety Audit process.

A detailed Traffic and Economic assessment has been undertaken using Cost Benefit Analysis (COBA) and Queues and Delays at Roadworks (QUADRO) techniques and computer models, in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, to quantify the economic benefit of the Proposed Scheme. Detailed costs have been prepared and included in the assessment to determine the economic value of the scheme. A range of sensitivity tests has also been undertaken to examine the extent to which results from the computer models vary under different scenarios.

The results of the COBA economic assessment, reported in the published Proposed Scheme Report, indicate that the Proposed Scheme represents good value for money with an overall Net Present Value of £99.780m and a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334.

On the basis of the information provided, our evaluation of the proposal is that it is inferior to the Proposed Scheme and does not warrant further examination.

TransportNI notes that the upcoming Public Inquiry provides an opportunity for your proposal to be discussed.

Mr Lynch submitted additional information regarding his proposals in advance of the Inquiry and spoke to the Inquiry on the morning of the 2nd day with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. He was supported by Joe Brolly and Kieran Kelly. The presentation and the subsequent questions and responses included quite a lot of repetition and thus a condensed version of these contributions is reported here:

At the commencement of his presentation the Inspector sought clarification between “another improvement opportunity” and “not an alternative proposal”. Mr Lynch said that the distinction in language is that an alternative proposal would have been funded through the DRD process with the consulting hours being paid for that. The Vector proposal is quite a simple solution and it is an opportunity with a small amount of development to convert because it is ostensibly a temporary traffic management solution. That is the distinction. We are at the beginning of a fast process as opposed to being at the end of a lengthy funded process.

The Inspector asked a second question, “Do you see this as a temporary solution pending a more elaborate solution perhaps along the lines of the proposal as laid out by the Department?”

Mr Lynch replied: The key point is it will fix quite a lot of the traffic problems, but from the community objections yesterday and some of the other cycle constraints it doesn't sound like the current proposal has a full appreciation of everything that is required. This probably will fix the traffic problem but there are other issues that will need to be addressed. This will buy time to address those other issues properly. That is probably how I see it actually being implemented.

Mr Lynch continued:

Introduction

The presentation incorporates much of the TNI material into the PowerPoint as part of the process. There is certainly nothing new in the material. It comes from the DRD's proposal.

I will give a bit of background of Vector, an overview of how we see the DRD proposal, a few notes on our struggles with the engagement and a high level view on what we are proposing. The points here are broadly the same as have been presented previously, just the structures have changed to make them into more of a coherent argument.

I am a mechanical engineer with a Masters from the University of Bath. I spent eight

years in the UK working for a top operation improvement consultancy, which means fixing process problems, and that could be in healthcare or large civil programmes. I worked on overhead transmission, and I have also worked on nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers, looking at complex programmes and distilling it down into what are the key things and how to drive improvements. I have identified over £300m worth of savings and delivering personally £3m savings per year to clients, and that is a recurrent saving.

We work on the biggest issues, find the bottleneck and do the sensible pragmatic thing to fix the problem. As a business, I will have been back in Northern Ireland for a year and that is where I came across this traffic problem.

We were not commissioned. I was sitting in traffic and thinking why am I sitting here. So I challenged it. Through the detail, I arrived at a solution, and offer it against what is being proposed. I can see vast sums of money wasted. We don't want to sit in traffic delays unnecessarily. At a high level we are trying to fix the strategic bottleneck whilst following the scheme objectives and these are the Government objectives: environment, safety, economy, accessibility, integration.

DRD Proposal

The key points are that the DRD scheme does not present a reasonable case for financial viability and I think the Vector proposal probably is financially viable.

At a high level, DRD fails to make its own objectives. On economy it is unclear if the scheme is going to be actually economically viable.

To improve safety the scheme forecast is an increase in accidents of 31%. We have big issues for the environment for the next 60 years, the forecast life of this programme. The area will still be fragmented when the scheme is in place.

It is in line with the low level Government policies that have been developed by the Department, but it can't be done until at least 2021 and that is contingent on money being available.

Cost Benefit

The scheme costs have risen from an initial estimate of £50m back in 2007. I have left a blank space where the final cost is actually going to be as there is too much uncertainty to know what is going to actually happen.

The anticipated scheme benefits are £174m. However we are not satisfied that the scheme will deliver the journey time performance. The impact of that is huge, minus £20m to £60m of the time saving benefit.

As was said yesterday, it is unclear what the operational impact of keeping Clifton Street open is, both in safety terms and operation. The other key point I want to challenge is on your QUADRO model. You propose that whenever you do the three year scheme that no one is going to have to face a delay longer than five minutes.

There is also another assumption, that 10% of traffic is going to disappear. How is this even possible? Where are they going to go? If they are going somewhere what is the accident impact on those other roads? It is not considered.

There are some challenges around the detailed cost assumptions. For example, only £75m is accounted in the economic appraisal. We need clarity of how £165m becomes £75m in the cost benefit appraisal.

£8m of costs are associated with water and rail improvement works. We need to challenge ourselves if we didn't build the scheme would we need to do the water improvements and would we use this opportunity for rail improvements.

Also another £11m conceivably on a 20% overrun.

I do economic appraisals as part of my job. When I've used my numbers I get the cost benefit of 1. So the range is between 1 and 3.3.

The stated benefit will pay for itself after 26 years. That means it won't be until at least 2047 that this scheme delivers economic benefit back to Northern Ireland. Pay back periods of 30 years should be used between trunk road options, 60 years is for bridges. If you choose the 30 years, the cost benefit is about 1.1, so roughly all the costs incurred equal the benefits.

Operational Issues

The key point is that Westlink is connected to York St which is connected to the M3. You have to take a bigger view of the system as you only ever can go as fast as the slowest element. I have identified 11 operational issues with this scheme.

The traffic leaving the city going onto the M2 still has traffic lights, and three lanes currently drops down to one lane in the proposed scheme. There is no mention of negative impact to travel time.

There are capacity and redundancy issues in the M3 to Westlink and Westlink to M3 links. There is only one lane so what happens if there is a crash. To get the same flow you need to go twice as fast with half as many lanes.

There are 188 departures from standard in the proposed design. This means that the roads being proposed have features of smaller, slower, tighter roads than the Design Manual would recommend. We don't know what that impact is in terms of accident performance.

There is the constraint in Westlink where there are sections of three lanes and sections that are two lanes. The proposed scheme will be three lanes but you still have a long section of two lanes. That now becomes the new bottleneck, and will cause over capacity issues.

You have also Dee Street which interacts with the system. There are huge queues on Dee Street and because Dee Street interacts with the M3 traffic it will back up into the Westlink. Dee Street will create a solid line of traffic back into Westlink as it currently does effectively killing off the right-hand lane in Westlink.

The COBA manual says: "The overcapacity report signals to the user that the COBA evaluation is dealing with flow levels above those normally experienced on links of similar standard. Consequently the model situation may not be realistic and the benefits calculated by the programme for the period of over capacity will become less meaningful the higher the degree of overcapacity. The cost benefit model has no control over the traffic flows that are input into the programme. It is therefore possible for links in the COBA to have traffic flow allocated, either in the base year or at some point in the future which are not economically feasible."

The model will tell you there is overcapacity and has no way to deal with it and requires manual intervention. There are two choices: Either increase capacity of roads to take more flow, i.e., turn from two into three lanes, or reduce the flow going into it. Since there is no proposal to address Dee Street we can only assume that the overcapacity issues are going to impact on flow.

The slide illustrates the overcapacity. Red is overcapacity at the moment, blue is overcapacity when the scheme opens and green will be overcapacity in the future; according to the DRD figures. The computer model is telling us we have a problem.

In the southbound direction all M3 traffic, in one lane, has 300m to fit into two full lanes of M2 traffic, also with an upward merge and limited sight distance. The Clifton Street traffic from the M2 needs to come across the M3 traffic. At the moment because York Street has a signalised affect it is protecting Clifton Street from the flows and Clifton Street is able to cope. Clifton Street is going to be swamped.

This impact is not considered because in the DRD proposal there is not a detailed queue time study on Clifton Street. Conceivably Clifton Street is going to back up because the junction is at overcapacity. Whenever it backs up, it will block one of those lanes so you have only one moving lane on the M2. This becomes the limiting factor right from Clifton Street, but also backing into the M2 link and right back into the M2 and again back into the M3.

Travelling Northbound the DRD design seeks to get traffic out of Westlink to the M3. What it does is shift all of that traffic further down the line to the next bottleneck, and the next bottleneck is Dee Street. Working backwards from Dee Street the traffic will build back over the bridge down the single lane link back to Westlink. The Westlink off-slip will fill and reduce the speed of the right-hand lane at Westlink. This impact will back up the two lane section at Divis Street. So one lane is dead with only the left-hand lane that is flowing. The M2 traffic has only the left-hand lane and it is going slowly because the Divis Street and Clifton Street traffic are trying to get across into the M3.

The journey time assumptions that the economic model is based on are flawed, and we don't know what the impact will be because it is a detailed problem.

Safety

The other point is safety. There is going to be an increase of 1,000 accidents, which is a 31% increase in accidents, and that is against the scheme criterion to improve safety.

Value for money

I don't think there is enough evidence to be reasonably certain that the scheme will yield value for money. In the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, TA 30/82, "The choice between options for Trunk Road schemes", the sole criteria for a scheme being worth the investment recommended is that it should be reasonably certain to give value for money.

Another point in TA 30/82, that there is an advantage to be gained from adopting a solution which leaves open for the future as many options as possible. We should be thinking how to get maximum benefit now whilst leaving our future generations to fix the problem in the future.

Engagement

We have not been welcomed by the DRD. The Minister has not been interested in saving £100m. They would undertake an assessment of our proposal with no development from us. They use the same consultants who get paid to build the scheme they are designing, to assess our proposal.

I met the DRD in February 2015. We could have had a trial done by August 2015 if we had had cooperation. Ultimately I have had to make all this information available to the public because this is the only mechanism that I have found for DRD to listen.

Vector Proposal

We have an improvement proposition which is forecast to deliver between 30% to 40% reduction in waiting time between the key strategic routes. The journey time savings will exceed the civil work due to Vector's knowledge of the big picture problems in designing against them, and it can be implemented rapidly as a trial to see will it work. Invariably it will have some teething problems but what you do with teething problems is you work through each individual one to resolve the problem.

The bottom line to Northern Ireland is £380m, so you don't spend money on something you don't require, and there are lots of benefits of moving faster.

What are we trying to fix here? Route 1 is taking city traffic out to the M2. Route two

is taking city traffic locally to the north shore. Route three is Westlink to M3 traffic. Red is Westlink to M2. Blue is M2 to Westlink, and purple is M3 to Westlink.

Deconstructing that further, we have intersections. We have motorways crossing non-motorway roads and to facilitate that we need traffic lights. These are the fundamental issues. Traffic lights introduce delays. Red is stop. Green is moving and grey is safety delays between the phases. You also need to allow for slowing down and speeding up, whereas if you are able to maintain free flow you avoid these delays. The configuration at the bottom has five times more flow than the top configuration.

The current system gets worse with more traffic. As more people try to interchange there are more changeovers and hence more time losses, and it is more pronounced in the evening time. People come out of the city on York Street. So York Street forces more signal changeovers in the evening times. This is the fundamental reason that we have a worse ratio at peak to off peak. If you fixed the intersections you can fix the lights and you can fix the problem.

Intersections

There is the Westlink to M3 intersecting with the M2 to Westlink and then York Street intersecting Westlink to the M2 and M3 in both directions.

Taking the first one, Westlink to M3 cuts the M2 to Westlink. What Vector proposes is rerouting using an existing underpass structure at Dock Street. That completely removes the conflict.

The second intersection is York Street itself. There are two flows of traffic here, strategic and local traffic and each need to be dealt with in a different way.

Firstly the local traffic. We propose taking it across the Dunbar Link, introduce two ways running for the full length of Corporation Street again, left under the Dock Street Bridge and back into north Belfast. There are six lanes underneath Dock Street Bridge currently without any widening.

Once you fix these two intersections the motorway snaps together in three ways. People will get onto the motorway earlier. People will join at other appropriate locations, for example, Millfield, Clifton St, even back onto the Westlink at Stockman's Lane or Broadway.

This will have real positive benefits to Belfast city centre. People will not be forced to struggle with bus lanes trying to get out of the city. What we are saying here is because York Street is no longer available, behaviour will change.

We can make accommodation for people in the city who would have used York Street regularly. Coming from the Albert Clock, instead of going straight on for York St we will take a right round Custom House Square, take a left over Queen Elizabeth Bridge and then you are facing the M3 on-slip. Take that on-slip and you are onto the weaving section of the M3. Weave across onto the M2 and that is all that is required.

Videos of some of these intersections at peak times at the moment show almost ghost like. For example, you can get six lanes on the Queen Elizabeth Bridge if you wanted to. Two lanes are all the provision that is required to interface into the M3. Get rid of the intersections, get rid of the traffic lights and you have free flow.

Trials

We are proposing that you can trial this. You can put bin bags over traffic lights and make arrangements with proper signing, make proper communications to the wider public that this is happening. That is the limiting factor on this being implemented. It is not physical change. Even if it does run sub-optimally, you are going to have clarity of where the sub-optimal points are and you can do something about it. There

are some obvious things you will be able to pick up beforehand and decide will we spend half a million smoothing this corner.

Costs

How much would this cost to implement? Does it feel like £165m? Does it feel like £60m? Does it feel like £1.6m? I will leave that judgment to you.

Pedestrians

There are tradeoffs in every design. At the moment, in the trial, you cannot have pedestrians crossing a motorway. But there are provisions with existing roads both east and west of York Street to be able to get pedestrians and cyclists and non-motorised users into the city. We are not saying this is it. We are saying let's get a trial and prove that it works, and then there is a whole pile of money. You can spend some of the money on improving these links and the local community, really taking into consideration concerns that they voiced yesterday and will continue to be raised today.

Vector Proposal versus DRD Proposal

Firstly Westlink northbound performance will be greatly improved. We have already said that the M3 will actually drive the behaviour on the Westlink; it is going to block the right-hand lane. Because we switch the traffic to the left-hand lane, so the M3 traffic is now on the left-hand side and that offers quite a few advantages.

Whilst the slow moving bottleneck caused by Dee Street will be there, the M3 traffic from Clifton Street and Divis Street can now merge into that slow lane. That leaves the fast lane virtually free flowing and because the design increases the distance for the M3 traffic, what we are doing is creating a buffer to take that slow moving M3 traffic off Westlink and brought onto another road, so it actually impacts the Westlink less. There are two lanes of freer flowing traffic for longer until Dee Street is fixed.

It also deals with the Clifton Street northbound Road Safety Audit issue. Now you come onto the lane that you want to exit on and if you want to go to the M2 you have only to move across one lane.

Southbound we are proposing two lanes of M2 traffic meeting with one lane of M3 traffic. There is about 300 metres to do that one weave in, and then further up the hill we leave Clifton Street where it is. You have another 300 metres to allow the next bit of weave to happen. Essentially there is twice as much weaving distance compared to the DRD proposal at or just before the bottleneck. This is going to improve our ability to smooth flows in the bottleneck hence and improve speeds.

Also you don't really need to tighten or smooth the corner at Jack Kirk Garage on the M2 to Westlink link. Whilst you are travelling at 24 miles an hour around that corner what is actually limiting the flow is still Westlink.

If you fix this problem now, then fix Dee Street in two years' time and maybe swallow the bitter pill of fixing the Westlink in seven years, you probably would have everything fixed in 10 years.

Performance Benefits,

In addition to the cash and the time saving, we are not doing any construction. This is a minor works, a temporary traffic management option which then buys time to think through how you make this work for Belfast.

Wrapping it all together then the key point is on economy. We have an estimated cost of £1m to £5m with a cost benefit of 18 to 220. That compares to 1 to 3.3 of the DRD scheme.

We keep the non-motorised users separate from the strategic junctions. That has to have a positive impact on safety. The longer term safety implications relating to

displaced traffic onto North Queen St and Corporation Street can be mitigated with several options. E.g. the cycle and pedestrians bridges that we talked about in some designs, or any other good ideas.

Our scheme will minimise construction so the use of resources is reduced, helping the environment. In respect of the build environment it creates the potential to fix it. That is the point on the accessibility. It is in line with the high level Government policies on integration.

The Vector proposal is not really about journey times but how much money do you want to spend in the area. It is more of the social question. Obviously if we are talking about value for money we are in the order of 60 times better value for money than the DRD scheme.

From a health and safety point it does increase separation between pedestrians and cyclists. From a safety point of view this is a good thing. Another key point on safety: a classic risk management methodology is you eliminate the risk first. If you cannot eliminate it you reduce it and if you cannot reduce it then accept it. This is in reference to the safety of pedestrians across York Street. The methodology is "Don't let them walk through the motorway". I think in years to come we will look back on it and say it was nuts.

The other key point is we have more lanes. We have not the one lane link between the M3 to Westlink and we have not the other link between the Westlink to M3 in the same form. Because we are not trying to have high speed single lane flow we have lower speed flow. Because kinetic energy is half times the mass times the velocity squared, this is why there is a big difference between an accident to pedestrians at 40 miles an hour and an accident at 30 miles an hour.

Since there is increased capacity, if a link does go down in a particular area it allows emergency vehicles to travel through the area faster. I have some footage showing an ambulance coming along Westlink and onto the M3. It has a difficult enough time at the moment making that journey; it will be interesting to see the negative impact of the one lane.

Vector has used a structured approach to determine a low cost solution to resolve Belfast's biggest traffic issue. The Vector solution can be trialled rapidly at low cost to verify the performance. From a high level the Vector proposal offers reasonable certainty on value for money. The proposal can be employed as a stop gap until a hybrid proposal has been developed that meets the needs of the city for upcoming generations

Mr Brolly added the following remarks:

I should say first of all that I am doing this as a concerned citizen, not as a barrister. I am here because I was initially fascinated by what they told me and then we went out on to the roads and travelled them, as we did for hours. The actual problems with the Department's solution are very obvious when you actually think about them.

The northbound route on the Westlink is going to be chaos. The consultants, URS, have already in their Road Safety Audit concluded that the Clifton Street on-slip onto the northbound carriageway will have to be closed because it is simply too dangerous and it is not known how badly it compromises road safety.

We drove last night at 5.25 p.m. that route, Westlink up in the two lanes of the M3 round on to the Lagan Bridge and we just hit gridlock. Under the DRD proposal it is one lane. The knock on effect of that on the Westlink has not been considered by the DRD proposal.

At present traffic travelling southbound from the M2 onto Westlink on a two lane link emerges at the Jack Kirk Garage traffic and immediately starts to find its lane going

onto the Westlink. Exactly the same with the M3 traffic, so when you come to the first set of lights at York St you are now in your lane. With the new scheme the merging can only start 300 metres further on, 300 metres from the Clifton Street on-slip. Traffic from the M3 is coming out of a single lane on the left-hand side merging with a two lane link coming from the M2 on the right-hand side. When you emerge from those links you have 300 metres if you want to get into the Clifton Street off-slip.

At the moment the Clifton Street off-slip is controlled by the York Street traffic lights. Although the Clifton Street off-slip fills up and comes down very close to Westlink it doesn't actually impinge on it very often, even at peak times, but there is going to be no traffic lights at York Street so the Clifton Street off-slip is just going to fill up.

Two other points that I want to make are this: Whenever this very cheap solution was brought to the DRD they said: Okay, we will get the consultants who stand to gain anywhere between £10.1m and £29m from the main scheme to assess the validity of the scheme that can only at best net consultants maybe £100,000 to £400,000. Now this is an astounding conflict of interest and we say that as a minimum, and the public should demand that there is a proper assessment of the Vector proposal.

The second point is that this can be trialled. Their only criticism is that it is unrealistic to say that the trial could be ready within eight weeks and it will take a longer time than that to get the communications out properly in the public and prepare properly for the trial.

We say it is incumbent, Mr Inspector, on the Government to trial this proposal. It will be done at minimum cost compared to the overall costs of the vast scheme that is proposed.

Mr Lynch added that he would accept the proposed access to the Port and could bolt it on to the Vector proposal.

Mr McGuinness asked Mr Lynch to clarify what he was saying in relation to the Port. His initial trial appeared to be limited to the route along York Street, eastwards along Dock Street and south along Nelson Street whereas he now was suggesting to trial the whole scheme.

Mr Lynch: I think this is a long version but you could have a trial and continue to have traffic lights. The least option would be not to do any modifications and continue to have all traffic signals at this junction operating as current. My preference is to do it in little pieces and improve each little discrete bit sensibly.

In response to a further question Mr Lynch confirmed that for the 31% improvement in flow you would not have access to the docks but you would probably get a 27% improvement (off the top of my head) by maintaining access.

At this point in the proceedings Mr McShane gave a presentation to the Inquiry on behalf of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. This is included in this report at 4.4.9 IP68, Kevin McShane (Belfast Harbour Commissioners).

Following this presentation the Department commented that Mr McShane had identified a number of the issues that the Department has identified and will provide more clarity tomorrow. Certainly he has highlighted a lot of the significant concerns.

RESPONSE BY THE DEPARTMENT TO THE VECTOR PROPOSAL - on the morning of the 3rd day of the Inquiry.

In answer to questions from Mr McGuinness, Mr Lynch confirmed that he had a Masters in Mechanical Engineering and was working towards Chartership. His appropriate experience has been in process and improvement work over the last four and a half years in large engineering firms in complex build programmes. He worked in a team of process improvement facilitating the answers with the subject matter

experts.

Mr Lynch agreed that he had no experience in traffic management, no traffic engineering qualifications, no environmental qualifications, no road design qualifications, no qualification or professional experience in the calculation of economics for the purposes of a large scale road scheme, that he is not professionally familiar with the road design standards and the detailed assessments and methodology required to design a road and had never designed a large scale road scheme. He was a facilitator but had no engineering experience. For example, he facilitated ideas but could not tell whether they will be designed to standard or not. He accepted that he couldn't say whether the design in front of him is to a DMRB standard.

He agreed that he brought forward the proposal at the start of 2015. The idea came from coming back to Northern Ireland and after one week realised this is broken.

Mr McGuinness pointed out that the proposal had changed on a number of occasions. Initially, before Mr Lynch went to see the DRD Committee up at Stormont, and met Mr Spiers the day before, there was no provision for non-motorised users, but overnight it changed to include provision for non-motorised users. He suggested that the reason the proposal has changed significantly is that every time a professional identifies a difficulty with the project Mr Lynch decides let's do something else. The problem is that he doesn't have the professional expertise to anticipate the problems that are going to come forward.

I have six issues in relation to the proposal: Methodology, strategic objectives, traffic assessment, engineering, the proposed trial and severance.

METHODOLOGY.

Yesterday the cost for smoothing a corner is £500,000, that is coming from the M2 going down Nelson Street. You have no experience, £500,000 is a guesstimate. In his presentation his scheme cost £1m to £5m whereas at page 67 in his slide he said it costs £1m to £10 million.

In response Mr Lynch said the cost of the scheme is proportionate to how much flow benefit you require and other considerations that are part of the scheme objectives. That would be developed as part of any design depending on what view is taken of the criteria.

Mr McGuinness pointed out that the estimated cost of the proposal did not include fees. I think you said yesterday that you have a patent and you will be looking for a percentage, so that is a cost to the scheme. What percentage are you looking for?

You have said that you don't need a detailed model because you use common sense. This is the busiest junction in Northern Ireland and is it not common sense that you have to make the model and use proper professional judgment. DMRB suggests where there is a likely transfer of at least 1,000 vehicles a day or where a major bottleneck needs to be removed, you need a network model. To develop this proposal and for his proposal to be acceptable, he would have needed to provide a network model.

Mr Lynch responded that if we approach this in a piecemeal sense, to do a trial, you can do it one junction at a time. One junction at a time is a minor improvement scheme and has quite different criteria reference the implications. You can do it on one junction without having to understand the impacts on the rest of the system.

Mr McGuinness: The proposal that he put before the Inquiry yesterday is a proposal with six routes. Now, it is proper for us to assess what that proposal means and what assumptions he has used in relation to that proposal, to see whether it is effective or not. Effectively every time the Department says that is not going to work then he

comes up with a new idea.

A number of journey time savings have been identified. It is not clear from the table if you look at route two where the volume is obtained from. In the journey time savings table Mr Lynch appears to have multiplied the total number of vehicles in the junction by the peak times. Not all the vehicles go through the junction at the peak time. Some are going through the junction at off peak. That is an inappropriate methodology.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.

TNI are looking at the entirety of the network and are identifying needs that have to be improved. York St Interchange has been identified as a key issue in policy documents, including BMAP. Our present scheme is entirely compliant with policy, but critically Mr Lynch's scheme doesn't meet the policy objective.

He indicates that his scheme is neutral in relation to integration. It is clearly not neutral. BMTP suggests that strategic and local traffic should not be mixed. The network should be defined such that conflicts between strategic and non-strategic traffic are minimised. Mr Lynch's proposal takes strategic traffic down Dock Street, which is perhaps a local distributor route, not a district distributor route. The hierarchy from BMTP has the strategic routes, the district distributors and the local distributors or residential roads. He is taking strategic traffic down a road that is two stages down from the strategic route. It is down York Street, a right turn in Dock Street and then up Nelson Street.

Not only are these local residential or local distributor roads, but they are not even Trunk Roads. The mixture of strategic and local traffic is inappropriate. York Street is an arterial route in relation to BMAP. The key issue in relation to an arterial route is that it is open to through traffic. That is all forms of through traffic. He is severing an arterial route. York Street is a key access from the city to north Belfast but that is being disregarded.

BMTP provides clear provision for cyclists and (figures 8.3 and 8.4). York Street and Yorkgate are part of the proposed cycling network. The proposal is contrary to that policy.

Mr Lynch said that there were 500 pedestrians using York Street. We estimate that 1,300 pedestrians use York Street based on counts in 2012. Provision for pedestrians and cyclists is important because the University of Ulster campus is opening and being regenerated and there is a train station at the top of York Street. We can comfortably suggest that the pedestrian demand will not get any smaller. We suggest the pedestrian demand will increase.

The Port of Belfast is a regional gateway. Their proposal does not maintain the access to the Port of Belfast, but reduces the access to the Port of Belfast. It will be very difficult for the Port to have any access along Corporation Street. This proposal doesn't meet the BMTP or BMAP.

Ms Somerville provided comments on planning policies as follows. For the record my name is Una Somerville. I work for URS. I am a planning consultant within the Beechhill House team. I am a planner and I have an honours degree in geography and a Master of Science in Town and Country Planning from Queens. I am a Member of the Town Planning Institute and a founding member of the Environmental Planning Law in Northern Ireland. I have approximately 28 years as planner.

We are not just dealing with BMAP. We are dealing with a suite of policies in regard to planning policy.

The Regional Development strategy (RDS) is the overarching framework. Within that the role of gateways and corridors, the role of the city region and the Port is

highlighted. Providing high quality connections is fundamental to the delivery of the Regional Development strategy. Mr Lynch's proposal would be in conflict with that.

The second-tier policy is the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland. This particular policy is an overarching document, the next tier down. Within it are the principles of planning. "Planning exists to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest and it should be carried out in a way that does not cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance". The movement of strategic traffic into a local neighbourhood, or into less hierarchical graded roads would indeed conflict with that policy.

In the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan and the BMTP there is reference to linking the facility to walk, to cycle. The closure of York Street and the severing of the connection is of principal concern in planning terms. Within the TP there are walking and cycling policies, (4.4 and 6.11). There is an emphasis in all the policies that there should not be a mixing of strategic with local because of the conflicts that arise.

Specifically in BMAP, which Mr Lynch had focused on, although BMAP is only one element of a suite of policies that would need to be looked at, it is not neutral. His proposal is entirely in conflict and contradicts BMAP.

Firstly in regard to the community greenways. York Street and Corporation Street under policies OS1 are identified as greenways where there is an assumption there would be free movement for pedestrians and cyclists.

Arterial routes has been referenced, and York Street is of concern there in regard to policy set three.

Other documents, while they are not planning documents they are very important documents, the first of which is the DSD's urban regeneration and community development policy framework of July 2013. On page 16 of that document, Policy objective three, is improving linkages from communities to areas of opportunities. It is very significant that there is encouragement and connection and the York Street link is a vital component in that. Mr Lynch's proposal would be in conflict with that policy.

In Belfast City Council's own regeneration strategy linkage to the City Centre is a vital element. The University of Ulster and the railway halt are key building blocks and future building blocks by way of regeneration, by way of opportunity for the communities that are adjacent and to the wider City and there would be significant concerns to delivering that objective within the City Centre regeneration strategy.

In summary Mr Lynch's scheme, from my professional opinion, is in conflict with not only policies in BMAP but also with the spectrum of policies throughout the hierarchy of planning. In planning terms and in my professional opinion Mr Lynch's scheme is in conflict with a range of planning policies from the highest level to the area level, to the site specific level.

Mr Megarry confirmed that TNI and consultants took these policy documents into account in designing the current scheme.

Ms Somerville reminded the Inquiry that the scheme development has been accompanied by a very robust and detailed Environmental Impact Assessment which includes planning. Some of the planning policies have not been referenced in detail in TNI's rebuttal of the Vector proposal. There is extensive reference to the transportation documentation that does form part of the planning forum. This verbal evidence provides some additional comment by way of rebuttal.

TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT.

Mr McGuinness continued: The fundamental premise of Vector's policy appears to be that they had analysed the Middlepath Street junction going up to the M3 and they felt that there was sufficient capacity. It is not clear exactly how that analysis was carried out. They are taking all of the city traffic to the M2 along Bridge End, along Middlepath street and a sharp left-hand turn to the on-slip. That is an additional 11,800 vehicles per day in 2021 and all those vehicles have to merge. That is a conflict

Whilst a superficial analysis of that junction might suggest that there is capacity here. Most of the traffic using that junction is intending to go up the M2. Whilst it is two lanes if you are intending to merge to the right, you will get into the right-hand lane. So a superficial analysis may suggest there might be capacity in the left-hand lane, but that doesn't recognise what is going on there at present.

At present we have a conflict between that traffic and the traffic coming down from the Sydenham Bypass. Putting another 11,800 vehicles per day up this on-slip will increase this congestion, and that is effectively another bottleneck.

To put that in perspective 11,800 per vehicles per day on average is 20 vehicles a minute. Adding another 20 vehicles per minute into that merge where there is already congestion won't work.

Mr Lynch suggests we solve this by getting rid of the traffic lights, and where there are conflicts there are ad hoc lights, effectively pedestrian lights. However it is inappropriate to use the ad hoc lights. There are regular events in the Odyssey on weekends and on a Thursday and Friday night. Mr Lynch's proposal shows traffic along Queen Elizabeth Bridge and Middlepath Street in free flow but has ad hoc pedestrian traffic lights at the bridge. He says his scheme works because it is free flowing traffic with no conflicts. Once he introduces signalised junctions he doesn't have free flow any more. What you have is a traffic light management system, and we have that in Belfast already, it is called SCOOT.

Looking at Dock Street, Mr Lynch is suggesting a closed loop. On the southern side of the bridge all of the traffic from the Westlink to the M3 will be brought through and on the northern side of the bridge you have two lanes at the pinch point on the bridge at present. Now those lanes flare at either side but at the pinch point there are two lanes.

Mr Lynch intends to take the traffic coming from north Belfast travelling west to east, along the north side of the bridge. On the south side you have traffic destined to the M3. Mr Lynch also wants to take traffic from the City Centre to north Belfast up that route. That involves travelling up Corporation Street, turning left and approaching this junction. We know that one lane is going west to east, so all of the traffic that he is rerouting is going along on that north side in this area. That is an additional 8,400 vehicles going E to W. The professional view of URS is that this will create a bottleneck. It doesn't work because that is a bottleneck.

It might be useful to consider the unconventional nature of this layout and imagine that you are driving up Corporation Street on a dark wet night. You turn left and approach the underpass. Very peculiarly you have oncoming traffic on your left-hand side. I don't think there is another situation in Northern Ireland that would have significant oncoming traffic to your left-hand side in a situation like this. You also have traffic coming from your right-hand side. You approach the traffic lights but you are approaching oncoming traffic as well. That is a safety issue.

Mr Megarry added Strategic roads have higher standards. There are increased horizontal, vertical geometries, stopping sight distances because they deal with greater volumes of traffic. Non-strategic roads have a commensurate reduction in

those standards. The fundamental issue with Vector is the sudden change.

Comment from our Road Safety Audit Team actually refers to vehicles overturning in relation to those movements, simply as a result of drivers failing to appreciate the change in standards having left the Westlink before joining the M3.

In the layout under Dock Street Bridge there are three lanes for traffic travelling in the western direction. In the eastern direction there are four lanes of traffic and, there are a number of pinch points. All of that is expected to be corralled somehow into the available space. There physically is not the space.

Two issues on that. Even if it could work it would be a bottleneck. The Vector proposal creates a bottleneck in attempting to remove a bottleneck.

There are specific road safety concerns with regard to the Dock Street junction. Traffic wishing to travel towards Brougham Street is facing the straight ahead traffic. Our Road Safety Audit professionals have concerns about the unconventional nature of this route.

ENGINEERING

Mr McGuinness resumed: BMTP states "The network should provide consistent standards of highway provision. Current sections of the strategic network include a number of discontinuities in terms of quality, safety and capacity."

We are mandated to deal with the bottleneck and to bring the design standards up. The Vector proposal provides a number of inconsistent standards. Under Mr Lynch's proposal we are moving from a motorway to a local distributor road and we have a sharp right-hand bend there. This is not a consistent standard of design. Vector may say that is what is there at present, but we say at present that is controlled by lights.

The only way pedestrians can get access to Galway House is via an ad hoc pedestrian light. Any pedestrian or cycling access to Galway House needs an ad hoc pedestrian light at least, otherwise Galway House is completely separated from everything other than cars. That means that somebody coming along on a strategic network can be suddenly faced with a traffic light.

The final point in engineering is the convergence of two routes under Mr Lynch's proposal. The first route is coming from the M2 and going to the Westlink down Nelson Street, and the second route is coming from the M3 and going to the Westlink, and they meet in Nelson Street.

Mr Megarry: The route from the M2 travelling towards the Westlink merges with M3 travelling towards the Westlink. Vector proposes two lanes without traffic lights. There will be a convergence of two lanes from the M2 with two lanes from the M3. The Vector proposal introduces a four to three to two within what we estimate to be 260 metres.

I don't believe that you will find that arrangement on any part of the entire 25,000 kilometers of the road network in Northern Ireland.

You cannot drop four to three to two without distance. That distance is simply not possible and it will cause congestion. It simply would not work.

THE PROPOSED TRIAL

Mr Lynch suggested that this trial could be done very easily; put black bags over the traffic lights and the only real issue is communication with the public in relation to the trial.

Firstly before we would undertake a trial, we would have to be convinced that there was some credit to the scheme. We would have to consider the safety, effectiveness and acceptability of it.

Mr Lynch makes criticism of the Department and suggests that had we engaged earlier they might have been able to do this trial by August. The scheme details were only revealed to us formally on 17th August. They have to be assessed. This consideration of whether it is safe, effective and operationally acceptable, has to be done by experts.

He suggests these consultants have a vested interest and can't assess this scheme. In effect he is saying that if consultants are engaged in designing the scheme and somebody comes along with a critique we have to get another set of consultants to decide on that critique. Rather than having one set of consultants you now have two sets of consultants. That is impracticable.

URS were engaged to do the Safety Audit. That didn't stop them exercising their professional judgment and the Safety Audit team saying: We think there are disadvantages in your scheme, we think there is potentially a safety issue in relation to Clifton Street. To suggest that you cannot have someone who has invested in a process as consultants to critique or trial this, doesn't run.

There is a fundamental misunderstanding of the policy in Northern Ireland. What is suggested is that a traffic management or a pilot project should run over the period of 12 months. You can't just say let's run this for a couple of days or for a couple of weeks. You have to run it for 12 months. If you are going to run it for 12 months we need to consider vehicle emissions and noise levels. We need to model the traffic to deal with those. Then if it is a permanent solution you may need an Environmental Statement and an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Mr McGuinness interjected: It is over a hectare in relation to the environmental regulations and you will meet significant criticism and would be vulnerable to challenge if you fail to make an Environmental Assessment. You need the air and noise assessments.

Mr Spiers added we have to be fully satisfied that any proposal is safe, effective and operationally appropriate. In my professional opinion I am satisfied that what is proposed here will cause congestion, significant safety issues and significant severance. There is nothing in this scheme that would convince me at this moment in time that there is any value in examining it.

SEVERANCE

Mr McGuinness: The loss of York Street to local traffic is a significant severance issue. We know it is already not consistent with the policy in relation to arterial routes, but it causes severance for local vehicle travellers, and that includes public transport. The existing access to the M3 and M2 via Dock Street is lost to people from north Belfast. That is a further element of severance.

Finally Galway House can only be accessed by local cars as it stands via Westlink. At present there is no access for non-motorised users, although I have suggested you could put in an ad hoc pedestrian light there that affects the traffic flow.

One point I think I omitted to make in relation to the strategy, and hopefully Una will keep me right, a number of the contributors so far this week have made this point, there is a hierarchy in relation to users, and at the top of the hierarchy is pedestrians and then cyclists. This, we say, is an example of them being ignored.

The final point is no pedestrian access to the east side of York Street in Mr Lynch's proposal. Pedestrians coming out of the railway station have to cross over to the west side. They will come down York Street and they will want to go down to the University. The question is how do you stop them? Do you put up a big barrier. The main point is the severance.

We have methodology, strategic objectives aren't met, traffic assessment doesn't

work, engineering doesn't work. The trial can't work the way it is suggested. For all of those reasons and severance, there is no point in trialing this because we have considered all those issues, we have addressed them all and it doesn't work.

Mr McGuinness: The only other short point I have is in relation to the criticism of the Department's scheme. I will be absolutely clear, nobody has disguised the fact that there are a number of constraints on this junction. There is a constraint in the Westlink, going east. There are bottleneck difficulties at the Sydenham Bypass. There are issues at Dee Street. The purpose of this scheme is not to fix the entire strategic network, it would be good if we could, but the policy documentation suggests that we are mandated to do it but we do it step by step and in a planned sustainable manner.

Vector appear to say you need to fix Dee Street before you can fix the York St Interchange. That will bring traffic quicker to the bottleneck, and that doesn't take any account of the fact that the works to the York St Interchange are expressly dealt with in policy. It has been identified as a key issue in relation to the strategic network.

You fix the busiest part of the network first. The busiest junction in Northern Ireland is the York St Interchange. So that is effectively what we are doing.

There has been some criticism of the COBA model, but we heard yesterday from Mr McShane, COBA is the industry standard. It is a very detailed model. COBA is used to identify benefits and dis-benefits along the footprint of the scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Paschal Lynch)

Mr Lynch's proposed scheme offers a simple approach to addressing the problems and issues that make up the York Street Interchange bottleneck. However when more scrutiny is applied it becomes clear that it cannot provide a solution to the many interconnecting problems that need to be solved.

The TNI responses provide evidence explaining clearly how the objectives of the Scheme are not addressed satisfactorily and how the claimed benefits cannot be realised. We are satisfied that the case has not been made to undertake any trial of the scheme or to undertake a more detailed analysis of the proposal.

Whilst we thank Mr Lynch for the substantial work which he has undertaken in developing the proposed scheme, we see no merit in it as a solution to the bottleneck on the Strategic Network at the Westlink/York Street/M2/M3 Junction.

4.2.8 Objection number	OBJ08
Objectors Name	Borghert Borghmans
Date submitted.....	04 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON YOUR DEPARTMENT'S PROPOSALS FOR THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE. THE SCHEME IS GREATLY NEEDED AND I DO NOT OPPOSE ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

TransportNI note that you are not opposed to scheme implementation.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE ASPECTS OF THIS PROJECT THAT HAVE SERIOUS PROBLEMS, AND THESE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION.

THE MAIN AIMS

THE MAIN AIMS OF THE PROJECT INCLUDE:

- **TO REMOVE A BOTTLENECK ON THE STRATEGIC ROAD NETWORK;**
- **TO DELIVER AN AFFORDABLE SOLUTION TO REDUCE CONGESTION ON THE STRATEGIC ROAD NETWORK;**
- **TO IMPROVE RELIABILITY OF STRATEGIC JOURNEY TIMES FOR THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC;**
- **TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE REGIONAL GATEWAYS FROM THE EASTERN SEABOARD KEY TRANSPORT CORRIDOR;**
- **TO MAINTAIN ACCESS TO EXISTING PROPERTIES, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS;**
- **TO MAINTAIN ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS;**
- **TO IMPROVE SEPARATION BETWEEN STRATEGIC AND LOCAL TRAFFIC.**

THE FIRST 4 ARE ADDRESSED WELL BY THE PROJECT, BUT THE FINAL 3 ARE PROBLEMATIC. THE PROJECT DELIVERS IMPROVEMENTS FOR STRATEGIC TRAFFIC, BUT AT BEST IT MAINTAINS THE PRESENT PROVISION FOR LOCAL ACCESS AND TRAFFIC. AND HERE LIES THE RUB. PRESENT LOCAL ACCESS IS VERY POOR. IT IS A SCANDAL THAT IN A £125MILLION BUDGET TO IMPROVE 1 JUNCTION NO MONEY CAN BE FOUND TO SHARPEN THE AIMS TO "TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO EXISTING PROPERTIES" AND "TO IMPROVE ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS".

Improve Access to Existing Properties

As stated within sub-section 14.8.1 (Local Vehicle Movements) in Volume 1 of the Environment Statement, with scheme implementation, it is accepted that significant mixing of strategic and local traffic would still occur, however would take place through a much improved highway environment. Whilst the benefits of these changes are obvious for the strategic road user, local vehicle movements (i.e. users of the local network of city roads) would also experience benefits, due to the reduction in strategic traffic interaction, leading to freer flowing conditions through junctions which are currently at-grade, signalised, heavily-trafficked and congested (i.e. along York Street). The flow of local traffic through the interchange would become more regulated and the safety of the highway environment would improve for the vehicle user. However, even though some roads would not be subject to physical alteration, they would be subject to traffic redistributional effects as a result of proposed changes to other parts of the existing road network altering routes taken to complete desired journeys.

Improve Access for Pedestrians/Cyclists

The Proposed Scheme has been developed to optimise provision for non-motorised users within the physical constraints of the existing built environment, and the competing engineering constraints of the proposed road links.

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great Georges Street. It is considered that these changes and additional improvements to

each of the remaining signalised junctions, would benefit non-motorised road users through improved amenity on these routes.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

For cyclists, it is noted that no dedicated cycling facilities currently exist on York Street. The Proposed Scheme improves access to the City Centre for cyclists by providing mandatory cycle lanes in each direction.

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE YORK STREET FLYOVER

I AM TRYING TO BE BRIEF AND I LIMIT MYSELF TO THE YORK STREET FLYOVER AND THE ROADS EITHER SIDE FROM DOCK STREET JUNCTION TO DUNBAR LINK.

ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, CYCLISTS WERE CONSIDERED AS A TRAFFIC FLOW FROM SHORE ROAD TO DUNBAR LINK, AS EVIDENCED BY THE PROVISION OF A BUS/CYCLE LANE. THIS IS AN IMPROVEMENT, BUT IT IS AGAIN LACKING IN AMBITION. MINISTER DANNY KENNEDY WANTS TO CREATE A CYCLING CAPITAL FOR THESE ISLANDS, BUT THESE AMBITIONS ARE THWARTED IF AT BEST THE CYCLIST IS EXPECTED TO SHARE WITH BUSES. THIS CANNOT BE A PERMANENT SOLUTION AND EVIDENCE FROM ACROSS BELFAST SUGGESTS THAT BUS LANES DO NOT GIVE A GIVE A SENSE OF SAFETY. THIS PERCEPTION IS A MAJOR BLOCK TO CYCLING UPTAKE. UNFORTUNATELY DRD ONLY CONCENTRATE ON ABSOLUTE SAFETY, THE KSI STATISTICS, NOT HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE THEIR SAFETY TO BE ENDANGERED BY A BUS DRIVING CLOSE BEHIND THEM.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD, COUNTRY-BOUND, THE PLANS FORESEE A 1.5M PAINTED CYCLE. THIS LANE WON'T BE PROTECTED BY A KERB. FIRSTLY, THE WIDTH OF THE LANE IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW FOR 2 CYCLISTS TO GO SIDE-BY-SIDE WITHOUT STRAYING INTO THE CAR SPACE. AS A MINIMUM THE WIDTH SHOULD BE 2M TO ALLOW A FASTER CYCLIST TO OVERTAKE A SLOWER CYCLIST WITHOUT STRAYING IN TO THE CAR LANE BESIDE.

THE SEPARATION BY PAINT IS NOT AT ALL SUFFICIENT. CAR DRIVERS WILL SEE THE WHITE LINE AS THE SAFE BUFFER BETWEEN THEM AND THE CYCLIST, LEADING, IRONICALLY, TO CLOSER OVERTAKING THAN IF NO LANE WAS PRESENT.

ABOVE IS THE PROPOSED LAY OUT. THE SEPARATION OF 1.6M BETWEEN THE CAR LANES IS TO ACCOMMODATE DOUBLE HEADED TRAFFIC LIGHTS. IT IS RATHER DISAPPOINTING THAT MORE SPACE AND SAFETY CONCERN IS GIVEN TO TRAFFIC LIGHTS THAN CYCLISTS.

I NOTE THAT THERE ARE 2 RUNNING LANES ARE DEVOTED TO TRAFFIC FROM DUNBAR LINK TO SHORE ROAD. WHEN PRESSED THE URS ENGINEER STATED THIS WAS NEEDED TO DEAL WITH THE TRAFFIC FLOW AT THAT LOCATION. THIS RINGS UNTRUE BECAUSE AT THE CITY CENTRE SIDE APPROACH THERE ARE ONLY 3 LANES OF OUTBOUND TRAFFIC AND THE LEFT MOST LANE SEPARATES OUT INTO TWO AT THE FLYOVER. WHY NOT CONTINUE WITH THE 3 LANE LAYOUT FROM DUNBAR LINK ACROSS THE FLYOVER?

ACROSS THE CITY DRD ARE HAPPY TO ALLOW PARKING 24 HOURS A DAY ON ONE LANE OF THE CITY'S A-ROADS. FOR INSTANCE, FOR 20 HOURS A DAY THE LISBURN ROAD IS REDUCED TO ONE LANE EACH WAY TO ACCOMMODATE PARKING, AND TRAFFIC LEVELS ARE COMPARABLE IF NOT HIGHER.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE NORTHERN APPROACH

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS OF HAVING A PAINTED CYCLE LANE WITH A SLIPROAD ACROSS IT IS THAT THE PAINT QUICKLY WEARS OFF. MOTORISTS DO NOT SLOW DOWN TO ENTER THE SIDE STREET, PUTTING PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS IN A VERY VULNERABLE POSITION. THE A12 OFFSLIP CUTS ACROSS THE PAINTED LANE AND WHILST TRAFFIC LIGHT PHASING MEANS CARS AND CYCLISTS SHOULD NOT MEET AT THE MOUTH OF THE LANE, THE MESSAGE OF CYCLE LANE MARKINGS WORN AWAY BY CAR TRAFFIC IS THAT IT IS NOT A SAFE PLACE FOR CYCLING.

AT THE GROSVENOR FLYOVER NO LESS THAN 6 TRAFFIC LANES ARE PROVIDED, BUT THERE IS NO SPACE FOR CYCLING OR FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT. THE ROAD IS VIRTUALLY EMPTY ALL DAY, IT IS GRANDIOSELY OVER-PROVIDING FOR CARS. A WASTE OF URBAN SPACE AND DESPITE IT BEING HAILED A DESIGN SUCCESS IT IS A HURDLE TO PEDESTRIANS GOING TO AND FROM THE ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL.

THE YSI REPORT ITSELF TALKS OF IMPROVEMENT FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS DUE TO FEWER TRAFFIC INTERACTIONS. FURTHER, THE PREDICTED LEVELS OF TRAFFIC ARE EXPECTED TO BE LESS AT YORK STREET THAN THEY ARE NOW. ACROSS THE UK INCREASE IN MOTOR TRAFFIC HAS STALLED IN THE PAST DECADE, CALLING THE MODELS TRAFFIC ENGINEERS USE INTO DOUBT. IN A SITUATION WHERE THERE IS LESS TRAFFIC, THE REMOVAL OF A GENERAL TRAFFIC LANE WILL NOT LEAD TO GRIDLOCK.

BEARING IN MIND THE ABOVE REAL LIFE EXPERIENCE WE CAN REDUCE THE SHORE ROAD BOUND LANES TO ONE AND REDISTRIBUTE THE SPACE TO ALLOW FOR CYCLE TRACKS, SEPARATED BY KERBS. IDEALLY WE WANT THE GOLD STANDARD, BUT THE FOLLOWING DIAGRAM IS A SENSIBLE COMPROMISE; DUTCH DESIGN PRINCIPLES WOULD HAVE A 3 TO 4M WIDE TWO-WAY CYCLE TRACK ON BOTH SIDES OF SUCH A ROAD.

Justification for Lane Provision

It is noted that the Proposed Scheme does not significantly alter the volumes of traffic travelling northbound on York Street between the junctions with Frederick Street and Dock Street. As such, the existing number of lanes has been carried over into the new layout. It is considered that any further reduction in lane provision could create a future constraint on traffic capacity on the route.

Traffic Models

The Traffic and Economic performance of the Proposed Scheme has been assessed using industry standard Cost-Benefit Analysis software and National Road Traffic Forecasts for traffic growth, as required by relevant Design Manual for Roads and Bridges standards.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

HERE IS MY VERSION OF THE FLYOVER LAYOUT:

THERE IS NOW A ONE-WAY CYCLE TRACK EITHER SIDE WITH A KERB AND A SMALL BUFFER ZONE TO ADEQUATELY SEPARATE CYCLISTS FROM MOTORISED TRAFFIC. THE JUNCTIONS EITHER SIDE OF THE FLYOVER SHOULD HAVE AN ALL DIRECTIONS GREEN PHASE FOR CYCLISTS, TO ALLOW THEM TO CROSS WITHOUT INTERFERING WITH PEDESTRIANS, OR RUN THE GAUNTLET OF CARS, LORRIES AND BUSES.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THIS WOULD BE TO PUT A 3-4M TWO-WAY TRACK UP THE NORTH SIDE OF THE FLYOVER.

Cycling Provision

As previously mentioned, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE FLYOVER APPROACHES - DUNBAR LINK JUNCTION

THE DUNBAR LINK/YORK STREET JUNCTION (LEFT) IS LEFT AS IT IS, BUT REDESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE THE END OF THE CITYBOUND BUS LANE. MY PROPOSED LAYOUT FOR THE FLYOVER CAN BE EXTENDED TO THE JUNCTION WITH THE BUFFER ZONES (MARKED IN BLACK HATCHES IN THE DIAGRAM LEFT) REMOVED TO ACCOMMODATE THE CYCLE TRACKS EITHER SIDE OF THE ROAD. THE JUNCTION HAS A 5-LANE ASL. THIS IS BEYOND CREDIBLE, BUT IT ACTUALLY IS THE PRESENT LAYOUT. EVEN MORE PUZZLING IS THE ASL MARKED OUT AT THE SOUTHBOUND ENTRANCE TO DUNBAR LINK. WHY, OH WHY? IT IS GREEN PAINT DESIGNED TO TICK BOXES BUT NOT DESIGNED FOR CYCLING: AN ABOMINATION THAT NEEDS TO BE ERASED!

THE AREA IMMEDIATELY TO THE SOUTHWEST OF THIS JUNCTION IS GOING TO BE DOMINATED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER CAMPUS, INTRODUCING MANY THOUSANDS OF PEDESTRIANS AND HUNDREDS OF

CYCLISTS. RATHER THAN WASTE MONEY ON GREEN PAINT, DRD COULD REALLY PUSH THE BOAT OUT AND WITH ADAPTATION INTRODUCE A PROPOSED TRANSPORT FOR LONDON JUNCTION DESIGN THAT IS SAFE FOR CYCLING (BELOW) TAKEN FROM:

[HTTP://WWW.HACKNEY.GOV.UK/ASSETS/DOCUMENTS /08 BRIAN DEEGAN AND PAUL LAVELLE - LCDS.PDF](http://www.hackney.gov.uk/assets/documents/08_brian_deegan_and_paul_lavelle_-_lcds.pdf)

Flyover Approaches

Works associated with the Proposed Scheme are limited to the northern arm of the current York Street / Frederick Street junction. The current Advanced Stop Line (ASL) provision on the other arms of the junction was reproduced in the published drawings.

It should be noted that a separate project, Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3, promoted by the Department for Social Development, proposes revisions to the other arms of the existing junction including, but not limited to, the current Advanced Stop Line markings. These proposals are being developed in consultation with TransportNI, DRD Cycling Unit and Sustrans.

YORK STREET - FLOATING BUS STOP

ACROSS THE ENTRY TO THE CAR PARK IS A BUS STOP. HERE IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF WHERE CYCLISTS ARE PUT IN DANGER BY THE PRESENT PROPOSALS. THE CYCLIST MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO OVERTAKE THE BUS AT THE STOP AND THEN FIND THAT THE BUS PULLS OUT. WHAT DOES THE CYCLIST DO? SWERVE INTO THE TRAFFIC LANE, OR GET RUN OVER BY THE BUS PULLING OUT?

A MUCH BETTER ARRANGEMENT WOULD SEE THE CYCLE PATH RUN TO THE LEFT OF THE BUS STOP, WITH THE WAITING AREA FOR BUS PASSENGERS EITHER ON THE "ISLAND" OR ON FOOTPATH.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE FROM BRIGHTON:

THIS DESIGN HELPED WIN BRIGHTON AND HOVE THE 2014 CIVITAS AWARD FOR ITS POLICIES TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT.

THE CYCLIST CAN PASS THE BUS STOP WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT TRAFFIC BEHIND OR BUSES PULLING OUT. THERE ARE VISUAL CLUES TO THE CYCLIST (THE TACTILE PAVING) ALERTING THEM TO PEDESTRIANS CROSSING.

WITH SO MUCH SPACE AVAILABLE, THE LIGHTER GREY IN THE DIAGRAM IS PEDESTRIAN SPACE - AT LEAST 6M, A COMPLETELY SEPARATED PATH WOULD EASILY BE INSTALLED. THIS CAN BE ACCOMMODATED WITHOUT TAKING AWAY THE *SUPERFLUOUS* TRAFFIC LANE ON THE OFF-SLIP AND YORK STREET.

MORE ROAD SPACE CAN BE GAINED IF THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS, INSTEAD OF BEING ON POLES BESIDE THE LANES, WERE PUT ON A GANTRY ABOVE THE LANE, SO REMOVING THE RATIONALE FOR THE 1.6M SEPARATION CENTRALLY BETWEEN THE TWO SETS OF NORTHBOUND TRAFFIC LANES. GANTRIES ARE COMMONPLACE EVERYWHERE BUT ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND. WHEN ASKED WHY THE RESPONSE WAS THAT POLES WERE WHAT WAS ALWAYS DONE; THAT GANTRIES WEREN'T EVEN CONSIDERED.

FURTHER DOWN YORK STREET THE CYCLE PATH AND FOOTPATH CROSS THE CITYSIDE COMPLEX OFF-SLIP.

IN MY VERSION THE SEGREGATED CYCLE LANE RUNS ON THE LEFT OF THE OFF-SLIP TO THE CITYSIDE COMPLEX. THEN IT CROSSES THE SIDE

ROAD AT A RIGHT ANGLE. VISUALLY THE PATH FORMS A CONTINUUM WITH THE PAVING OF THE CYCLEPATH AND THE FOOTPATH FORMING A VISUAL CLUE TO DRIVERS, PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS. RAISING THE ROAD TO KERB HEIGHT WOULD ALSO TELL DRIVERS TO BE ALERT AND SLOW DOWN.

THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT SEES MOTORISTS SWEEPING INTO THE CAR PARK, WITH NO REAL INCENTIVE TO SLOW DOWN AND PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS NEEDING THE AID OF TRAFFIC LIGHTS TO GET ACROSS; PEDESTRIANS NEEDING 2 CROSSINGS AND POTENTIALLY WAITING TWICE. IT IS A VERY CAR-FRIENDLY DESIGN, WHICH DOES LITTLE TO GET PEOPLE GOING ON FOOT, OR BY BIKE OR BUS.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A CONTINUOUS FOOTPATH WHICH COMPELS DRIVERS TO SLOW DOWN.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Footway width to the North of York Street Bridge

It may not be apparent on the drawings published, but a retaining wall structure is proposed which segregates the identified 6m area into two footways separated by a level difference of up to 4.5m.

Gantries for Signals

For maintenance reasons, primary traffic signals are not typically provided on gantries above carriageways in Northern Ireland. In any event, it will be necessary to provide traffic bollards to channel traffic flows on York Street. These bollards require traffic islands of a minimum width of 1.4m to ensure suitable lateral clearance to running lanes.

Cityside Complex Off-Slip

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

YORK STREET CITYBOUND

THERE IS AMPLE SPACE TO INCLUDE A SEGREGATED CYCLE PATH FROM DOCK STREET TO THE FLYOVER IN THE PLANS. SOUTH OF THE FLYOVER SPACE IS MORE LIMITED, BUT EVEN HERE A COPENHAGEN STYLE CYCLE PATH (SUCH AS THE ONE ON VICTORIA STREET) CAN BE INTRODUCED BESIDE THE CITYBOUND BUS LANE. I DESPAIR AT THE LIMITED AMBITION THE DESIGNERS HAVE SHOWN TOWARDS CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS WHEN SPACE HAS BEEN SO ABUNDANTLY AVAILABLE!

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on

York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

FUTURE THINKING

THE DESIGN FOR YORK STREET, SPECIFICALLY THE FLYOVER, IS BEHIND THE TIMES. IT DOESN'T THINK OF NEAR FUTURE WHERE THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER WILL BRING A LARGE INFLUX OF BICYCLE USERS TO THE AREA; IT DOESN'T MENTION OR CATER FOR THE FLOW OF PEDESTRIANS FROM YORKGATE STATION TO THE CAMPUS. BELFAST CITY COUNCIL HAVE AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR DUNBAR LINK, BUOYS PARK AND THE LIBRARY SQUARE, WITH EVENTS SPACES, REDUCTION AND BANNING OF MOTOR TRAFFIC. THE PLANS ARE BLIND TO THE ROLL OUT OF THE BICYCLE HIRE SCHEME.

IN THE TEXT OF THE PROPOSALS THERE IS TALK OF COMMUNITY GREENWAYS, BUT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO SEE WHERE THEY ARE DESIGNED INTO THE PLANS. ONCE THE CONCRETE HAS BEEN POURED AND THE ROAD LAYOUT HAS LITERALLY BEEN SET IN STONE IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO PUT COMMUNITY GREENWAYS IN PLACE WITHOUT SERIOUS COMPROMISE TO THEIR EFFECTIVENESS.

ONE OF THE GREAT PHRASES OF BUILDING CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE IS "BUILD IT, AND THEY'LL COME". THE NUMBERS OF CYCLISTS ARE SO LAMENTABLY LOW, PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THE PERCEIVED DANGER OF THE JUNCTIONS AND HEAVY TRAFFIC. DESIGN THE INFRASTRUCTURE RIGHT AND CYCLISTS WILL COME. AROUND THE CYCLEPATHS OF SOUTH AND EAST BELFAST NUMBERS OF CYCLISTS HAVE INCREASED DRAMATICALLY, WITH CYCLING MODAL SHARE FOR INNER SUBURBS APPROACHING 10%.

NORTH BELFAST HAS BEEN BYPASSED BY THIS REVOLUTION, AND THE PROPOSALS AS THEY ARE WILL NOT ENCOURAGE MORE TO CYCLE TO WORK, OR TO GO INTO THE CITY CENTRE TO SHOP OR FIND ENTERTAINMENT.

The design of the Proposed Scheme has been developed with reference to the current standards of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The proposals presented for consultation are considered to address the potential future demand for pedestrians and cyclists on York Street, following the relocation of the Ulster University campus. This is evident in the provision of cycle lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions and the provision of continuous pedestrian links, including controlled crossings, along the proposed footways on each side of York Street. The proposed southbound bus lane also provides an opportunity to improve direct bus links to the new campus from North Belfast and the strategic road network.

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Community Greenways

As discussed in sub-section 14.5.6.7 in Volume 1, and shown on Figure 14.1 in Volume 3 of the Environmental Statement, Carr's Glen/Waterworks (BT 147/01) Greenway commences at the Dock Street/Garmoyle Street junction, passing under the M2 (via Dock Street) before veering northwards along York Street.

In terms of continuity, the greenway would be unaffected by the Proposed Scheme, however would be affected by the problems associated with the complex junction arrangement at Dock Street/Nelson Street as noted above. Essentially, with scheme implementation, the greenway would not be enhanced by proximity to traffic and visual intrusion associated with new overhead structures. Nevertheless, the reduced amenity would only affect a small proportion of the greenway, in an area where the perceived amenity benefits are already low in terms of recreational, ecological and aesthetic value.

MEETING THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT - BUT NO MORE, AND PROBABLY FALLING SHORT

A RECAP OF THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT:

- **TO MAINTAIN ACCESS TO EXISTING PROPERTIES, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS;**
- **TO MAINTAIN ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS;**
- **TO IMPROVE SEPARATION BETWEEN STRATEGIC AND LOCAL TRAFFIC.**

THESE AIMS LACK AMBITION AND IT ARGUABLY THOSE AIMS ARE NOT BEING MET. THE PROJECT DOCUMENTS TALK OF LESSENING THE IMPACT FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS, YET A PERSON TRAVERSING THE JUNCTION ACROSS THE FLYOVER IS STILL CROSSING TWO ROADS WITH TRAFFIC LIGHTS AS THEY CURRENTLY DO. AT THE CITYSIDE COMPLEX ENTRANCE PEDESTRIANS WILL FACE A NEW STAGGERED CROSSING THAT PRIORITISES MOTORISTS OVER PEDESTRIANS. CYCLISTS WILL NEED TO DUEL WITH BUSES ON A SHARED BUS/CYCLE LANE AND DICE WITH DEATH WHEN BUSES ARE PULLING AWAY FROM THE STOP AT THE CITYSIDE COMPLEX.

NO THOUGHT WHATSOEVER IS GIVEN TO INCREASED NUMBERS OF PEDESTRIANS USING YORKGATE RAIL HALT TO ACCESS THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER CAMPUS. IF THE PEDESTRIANS ARE MADE TO WAIT EXCESSIVELY LONG AT DOCK STREET AND THE WESTLINK SLIPROADS EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT PEDESTRIANS WILL NOT WAIT, BUT USE ANY HIATUS IN THE TRAFFIC FLOW TO GET ACROSS. THIS COULD HAVE FATAL CONSEQUENCES.

STRATEGIC TRAFFIC WILL BE BANISHED INTO THE CHASM BELOW GROUND LEVEL, BUT PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS WILL STILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH CONSIDERABLE TRAFFIC JOINING AND LEAVING THE WESTLINK.

TransportNI considers that the Proposed Scheme meets its stated objectives. It is considered that the amenity of York Street for non-motorised users would be improved through the removal of the largest traffic flows from the junctions by grade separation.

DRD CYCLING UNIT

THE ENGINEERS PRESENT AT THE PUBLIC VIEWING OF THE PLANS MENTIONED THAT THE DRD CYCLING UNIT HAD SEEN THE PLANS. SEEN MAYBE, BUT THERE ARE MANY ISSUES THAT RUN COUNTER TO THE

DRAFT BICYCLE STRATEGY, SO IT WOULD BE HARD TO BELIEVE THESE PLANS RECEIVED ANY KIND OF APPROVAL FROM THEM.

AT THE CHANGING GEAR CONFERENCE MINISTER DANNY KENNEDY HAS SET OUT HIS STALL TO MAKE BELFAST A CYCLING CAPITAL. WHEN THE GIRO ROLLED INTO TOWN RENOWNED DUTCH CYCLING COMMENTATOR GIO LIPPENS SPOKE OF BELFAST AS A GREAT CYCLING CITY. LET'S CHANGE THE DESIGN TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THOSE WORDS.

DRD Cycling Unit

Consultation was undertaken and continues to be undertaken, with DRD Cycling Unit in the development of the Proposed Scheme.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Borghert Borghmans)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI written responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Broghert Borghmans)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.9 Objection number	OBJ09
Objectors Name.....	Stephen O'Kane
Date submitted.....	05 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

AFTER ATTENDING THE CONSULTATION EVENT AT THE RAMADA ENCORE HOTEL, I WAS ASKED TO MAKE MY POINTS AGAIN TO THIS EMAIL ADDRESS, AS NO ONE AT THE EVENT WAS RECORDING RESPONSES ON THE NIGHT I ATTENDED. I WAS TOLD THIS BY A URS EMPLOYEE, AND THIS SEEMS TO ME TO BE AN ATTEMPT AT URS TO DEFEND THEIR FLAWED PLANS BY DEFLECTING ANY CRITICISM.

I HOPE I AM WRONG.

I FEEL THAT THIS IS A VERY POOR, AND HIGHLY FLAWED WAY TO CONSULT WITH THE PUBLIC, AND I WOULD REQUEST THAT THE EVENT IS HELD AGAIN IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AND THAT RESPONSES ARE RECORDED DURING THE EVENT.

The procedure for statutory Orders Exhibitions is set out in the various statutory instruments and TransportNI policy. This requires members of the public to convey their opinions in writing to TransportNI. The upcoming Public Inquiry presents a further opportunity for members of the public to make a formal representation in relation to the Proposed Scheme.

HOWEVER I WILL DO AS SUGGESTED ANY MAKE MY POINTS AGAIN HERE.

THIS IS A RARE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY, ONE THAT WILL NOT COME AROUND AGAIN FOR PROBABLY AT LEAST 40 YEARS. THIS OPPORTUNITY MUST BE TAKEN NOW TO FUTURE PROOF THIS JUNCTION FOR PEOPLE. NOT JUST CARS AND BUSES.

CITIES ARE ABOUT PEOPLE, AND MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE. NOT JUST ABOUT THE MOVEMENT OF CARS. CITIES WORK BETTER FOR EVERYONE, (INCLUDING MOTORISTS) IF CITIES ARE DESIGNED FOR PEOPLE, NOT JUST TRANSPORT.

THE OPPORTUNITY MUST BE SEIZED NOW TO ENSURE THAT THIS VITAL PIECE OF INFRASTRUCTURE IS DESIGNED FOR EVERYONE, NOT JUST FOR MOTOR VEHICLES.

THIS JUNCTION IS IN A RESIDENTIAL AREA, ONE OF THE FEW RESIDENTIAL AREAS CLOSE TO THE CITY CENTRE, AND WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE MORE RESIDENTIAL AREAS IN THE CITY TO BRING LIFE BACK INTO THE CITY CENTRE.

THIS SCHEME NEEDS TO ENSURE THAT IT DOES NOT FURTHER RESTRICT ACCESS TO THE CITY CENTRE ALONG THIS VITAL ROUTE FURTHER ELIMINATING ANY INCENTIVE TO ENTER THE CITY AFTER CORE SHOPPING HOURS.

NMU Audit Process

The Proposed Scheme has been developed to optimise provision for non-motorised users within the physical constraints of the existing built environment, and the competing engineering constraints of the proposed road links.

In accordance with Standard HD42 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, the design team has completed the non-motorised user audit process. Its objectives are to:

- encourage all reasonable opportunities to improve the service offered to non-motorised users;
- prevent conditions for non-motorised users being worsened by the introduction of the Proposed Scheme; and
- document design decisions that affect non-motorised users.

It is considered that the Proposed Scheme would enhance access to the City Centre for non-motorised users and public transport by the inclusion of northbound and southbound cycle lanes and a southbound bus lane along York Street. In addition, it is considered the local community would benefit from improved continuity on footway links along York Street, the reduction in crossing widths, and the removal of significant traffic volumes from the remaining junctions.

ONE OF THE MAJOR FLAWS IN THIS SCHEME IS THE LACK OF CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO CYCLISTS. WHAT CONSIDERATION THERE WAS, WAS DONE IN BY SOMEONE WITH LITTLE OR NO UNDERSTANDING OF CYCLISTS NEEDS.

THE PROPOSED LAYOUT, IN PARTICULAR, THE YORK STREET BRIDGE/OVERPASS IS ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS TO CYCLISTS.

CYCLING IN SHARED LANES IN A BUSY CITY IS DANGEROUS. CYCLISTS NEED SPACE. CYCLISTS NEED PROTECTION. CYCLISTS NEED TO BE SEGREGATED FROM LARGER AND FASTER MOVING VEHICLES, OR ELSE CYCLISTS WILL DIE.

GIVING SPACE TO CYCLISTS WILL BENEFIT ALL ROAD USERS.

IF SPACE IS GIVEN TO CYCLING, IT WILL ENCOURAGE MORE CYCLISTS, IT WILL MOVE MORE PEOPLE OUT OF CARS, REDUCING CONGESTION FOR EVERYONE.

IF SPACE IS GIVEN TO CYCLING, IT WILL REMOVE CYCLISTS FROM MOTOR VEHICLE LANES, AND IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW FOR BOTH CYCLISTS, AND MOTORISED TRAFFIC.

IF SPACE IS GIVEN TO CYCLING, LESS CYCLISTS WILL DIE.

THE DRD MINISTER WANTS BELFAST TO BE A CYCLING CITY, AND TO HELP LEAD THE CYCLING REVOLUTION IN THE UK. TO ACHIEVE THIS, CYCLING NEEDS TO BE PRIORITISED AND SAFE ROUTES MUST BE PROVIDED.

THIS IS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE QUALITY CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE, AND TO KEEP ENCOURAGING MORE PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR CARS.

Cycling Provision

The proposals presented for consultation are considered to address the potential future demand for pedestrians and cyclists along York Street, following the relocation of the Ulster University campus.

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. A revised proposal has been developed and will be presented at the upcoming Public Inquiry. All aspects raised by your letter have been considered by TransportNI in developing this revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE PROPOSED CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE IS SUB-STANDARD, AND IN THE 21 CENTURY THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE, AND IT SHOWS A COMPLETE LACK OF FORESIGHT IN THE MINDS OF THE ARCHITECTS OF THIS SCHEME.

TO ALLOW ONLY 1.5M FOR CYCLISTS IN AN UNPROTECTED LANE OUT OF OVER 27METRES IN TOTAL WIDTH IS UNFATHOMABLE. THIS SINGLE STATISTIC SHOWS CLEARLY HOW MUCH CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO CYCLISTS IN THIS DESIGN.

THERE IS ENOUGH WIDTH IN THIS BRIDGE/OVERPASS TO ALLOW WIDE FOOTPATHS, SEGREGATED BUS LANES, PROTECTED CYCLE LANES AND ENOUGH LANES FOR OTHER MOTORISED TRAFFIC.

WITH THIS PROPOSED LAYOUT, IF A CYCLIST MAKES A MISTAKE, THE CYCLIST WILL LIKELY BE INJURED OR KILLED BY TRAFFIC.

IT IS ALSO THE CASE IN THIS LAYOUT THAT IF A DRIVER MAKES A MISTAKE, THE CYCLIST WILL ALSO LIKELY BE INJURED OR KILLED.

EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES, AND ENOUGH IS KNOWN ABOUT ROAD DESIGN THAT THE DESIGNERS SHOULD KNOW THAT ROAD DESIGN NEEDS TO ALLOW FOR A SMALL MISTAKE TO NOT RESULT IN A FATALITY.

IN THIS PROPOSED SCHEME, A DRIVERS MOMENTARY LAPSE OF ATTENTION, A MOMENT OF DISTRACTION, A MISREADING OF ROAD LAYOUT COULD EASILY RESULT IN A CYCLISTS DEATH.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE BRT (BUS RAPID TRANSPORT) ROUTES ARE BEING ROLLED OUT IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE CITY, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT IF IT IS EXPANDED TO THE NORTH OF THE CITY IT WILL BE ALONG THIS ROUTE, AND THEREFORE THE BUS LANES SHOULD BE SEPARATED FROM BICYCLES, AND OTHER MOTORISED TRAFFIC.

Belfast Rapid Transit

In developing the Proposed Scheme, consultations have been undertaken with the teams developing Belfast Rapid Transit. No route has yet been selected for connection to North Belfast.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER WILL BE PROVIDING AT LEAST 200 BICYCLE PARKING SPACES, PRIMARILY ON FREDRICK STREET RIGHT AT THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE JUNCTION DEVELOPMENT. THEREFORE IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NUMBER OF CYCLISTS IN THIS AREA WILL BE INCREASING GREATLY, AS COURSES AND STUDENTS MOVE FROM JORDANSTOWN TO THE NEW CAMPUS BUILDINGS.

Cycling Provision

The proposals presented for consultation are considered to address the potential future demand for pedestrians and cyclists along York Street, following the relocation of the Ulster University campus.

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

ANOTHER FLAWED ASPECT IS THE JUNCTION DESIGN. THERE HAS BEEN AS MUCH CONSIDERATION FOR CYCLIST IN THE JUNCTION DESIGN AS THERE HAS BEEN IN THE WIDTH ALLOCATION FOR CYCLISTS.

-THE YORK STREET/FREDERICK ST JUNCTION SOUTHBOUND SHOULD PROVIDE PROVISION FOR A CYCLIST TURNING RIGHT INTO FREDERICK ST FOR THE UNIVERSITY PARKING FACILITY.

-NO CYCLE LANES HAVE BEEN PROVIDED AT ALL ON YORK STREET BETWEEN FREDERICK ST AND GT GEORGES ST.

-NO PROVISION FOR SOUTHBOUND CYCLISTS TO TURN RIGHT ONTO GT GEORGES ST.

-SOUTHBOUND BUS/CYCLE LANE NARROWS TO A DANGEROUS PINCH POINT AT GT GEORGES ST/YORK ST JUNCTION.

-SOUTHBOUND BUSES ON YORK STREET BRIDGE/OVERPASS WILL EITHER HAVE TO SQUEEZE PAST CYCLISTS OR MOVE INTO ONCOMING TRAFFIC, EITHER SITUATION IS HIGHLY DANGEROUS.

-THE CYCLING LANE MARKINGS SHOULD CONTINUE THROUGH THE JUNCTIONS ESPECIALLY ON THE SOUTHBOUND DIRECTION REACHING THE YORK ST BRIDGE/OVERPASS OTHERWISE M2 TRAFFIC WILL LIKELY CUT ACROSS CYCLISTS.

-PINCH POINTS AT THE TRAFFIC SIGNALS MUST BE RESOLVED. PINCH POINTS SUCH AS THIS CAUSE THE MOST DIFFICULTY FOR CYCLISTS FORCED TO SHARE ROAD SPACE WITH INCOMPATIBLE VEHICULAR TRAFFIC.

-THE LOOPS AT THE JUNCTIONS MUST DETECT CYCLISTS

-TRAFFIC LIGHT TIMING MUST ALLOW AMPLE TIME FOR CYCLISTS TO PASS *ESPECIALLY SOUTHBOUND REACHING THE YORK ST BRIDGE/OVERPASS DUE TO THE LENGTH OF THE OPEN JUNCTION.

-DRIVERS TRAVELLING NORTH ON YORK STREET ARE USED TO ONE WAY, MAKING THIS TWO WAY IS DANGEROUS, SO SOUTHBOUND LANES NEED TO BE SEGREGATED/PROTECTED.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SIMPLE, LOW COST SOLUTIONS:

WIDER PROTECTED CYCLE LANE ON THE NORTH BOUND SIDE.

PROTECTED CYCLE LANE ON THE SOUTH BOUND SIDE - SEPARATED FROM THE BUS LANE/ THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED IN SEVERAL WAYS,

ONE LESS NORTH BOUND LANE, I.E. TWO TOWARDS M2, AND A SINGLE LANE TOWARDS YORK ROAD. REMOVE ONE OR MORE (OR NARROW BOTH) LANE SEPARATORS.

AS A LAST RESORT NARROW OR REMOVE PATH ON EAST SIDE OF THE BRIDGE (VIRTUALLY NO PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC THERE).

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3

Works associated with the Proposed Scheme are limited to the northern arm of the current York Street / Frederick Street junction. It should be noted that a separate project, Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3, promoted by the Department for Social Development, proposes revisions to the other arms of the existing junction including, but not limited to, changes to provision for cyclists. These proposals are being developed in consultation with DRD Cycling Unit and Sustrans.

Justification for Lane Provision

It is noted that the Proposed Scheme does not significantly alter the volumes of traffic travelling northbound on York Street between the junctions with Frederick Street and Dock Street. As such, the existing number of lanes has been carried over into the new layout. It is considered that any further reduction in lane provision could create a future constraint on traffic capacity.

I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THESE POINTS TO HAVE BEEN RECORDED ON THE NIGHT, AS IT IS POSSIBLE THAT I HAVE MISSED SOME POINTS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ROAD DESIGN NEEDS TO BE REVISITED.

WE NEED TO BRING THIS JUNCTION UP TO THE HIGHEST STANDARD FOR ALL ROAD USERS, AND PEDESTRIANS. THIS CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT BE JUST A SCHEME FOR MOTORISED TRAFFIC.

I HOPE THAT MY POINTS WILL BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY.

I WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT MY EMAIL HAS BEEN RECEIVED, AND IDEALLY I WOULD LIKE A RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES I HAVE RAISED HERE.

In developing the Proposed Scheme, TransportNI has considered the needs of both motorised and non-motorised road users in accordance with the standards of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. Due to the physical constraints on the site, it is not possible to fully address all these competing interests, with the Proposed Scheme considered an appropriate compromise solution.

Inspectors' Comments (Stephen O'Kane)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI written responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Stephen O'Kane)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.10 Objection number	OBJ10
Objectors Name.....	Kimberley Reynolds
Date submitted.....	06 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I FEEL LIKE THERE IS AN INCONSISTENT ROUTE DESIGN FOR CYCLISTS ON YOUR PLANS.

FOR EXAMPLE CYCLING PAST THE BUSY CITYSIDE RETAIL PARK MEANS POTENTIAL CONFLICT WITH BUSES, WHICH HAVE TO CROSS THE CYCLE LANE TO REACH THE BUS STOP. TAKE THE CYCLE LANE BEHIND THE BUS STOP, IT'S A VERY SIMPLE DESIGN AND SHOULD BE EASY TO CHANGE, IT WOULD ALSO HELP WITH THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC.

YOU HAVE A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY HERE TO HAVE SEPARATE CYCLE LANES MAKING TRAVELLING SAFER FOR EVERYONE – DRIVERS INCLUDED.

PLEASE LISTEN TO WHAT THE PUBLIC HAVE TO SAY.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on

York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Kimberley Reynolds)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (kimberley Reynolds)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.11 Objection number	OBJ11
Objectors Name.....	David McKeever
Date submitted.....	06 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

PLEASE CONSIDER MY COMMENTS, AS A RESIDENT OF BELFAST AND ROAD USER, ON THE PROPOSED REDESIGN OF YORK STREET.

IN SHORT; THE PROJECT IS NOT VIABLE WITHOUT FULLY SEGREGATED CYCLE LANES IN EVERY DIRECTION. AT A TIME WHEN BELFAST IS SUFFERING FROM AN OBESITY EPIDEMIC, MY UNIVERSITY IS PLANNING TO MOVE MANY DEPARTMENTS TO THE AFFECTED CITY CENTRE CAMPUS AND BELFAST IS IMPLEMENTING ITS CYCLE SHARE SCHEME IT IS SCANDALOUS AND INEXCUSABLE THAT ANY TOWN CENTRE INFRASTRUCTURE WORK DOES NOT ACCOUNT FOR THE NEEDS OF CYCLISTS. GIVEN THESE CHALLENGES ALL INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD AIM AT REDUCING MOTORISED TRANSPORT AND INCREASING ACTIVE TRANSPORT. BELFASTERS NEED TO GET OUT OF THEIR CARS AND ONTO THEIR BIKES WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT. ANY LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKING TO DEEPEN CAR DEPENDENCY IS FAILING IN ITS DUTY OF PUBLIC SERVICE. SO FIX IT.

Cycling Provision:

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (David McKeever)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (David McKeever)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.12	Objection number	OBJ12
Objectors Name	Emer Bussman	
Date submitted.....	06 March 2015	
NIMVO plot number	N/A	

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I AM EXTREMELY OPPOSED TO WHAT I HAVE JUST READ ABOUT THIS NEW YSI PLAN. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT CYCLING ORGANISATIONS WERE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING OF THIS AND WHAT SAFETY MEASURES ARE BEING PUT IN PLACE FOR CYCLISTS. I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT YOU WANT TO IMPROVE THE TRAFFIC FOR MOTORISTS, BUT SURELY YOU ARE JUST ADDING TO THE TRAFFIC PROBLEM BY ENCOURAGING MORE PEOPLE TO DRIVE AND MAKING DRIVING EVEN EASIER! I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT GUIDELINES ARE ADHERED TO REGARDING CYCLISTS FOR THE BUILDING OR IMPROVING OF INFRASTRUCTURE FOR MOTORISTS. IF YOU BUILD THIS WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE BEST POSSIBLE CYCLING SAFETY, YOU ARE REPEATING PAST MISTAKES AND NOT MAKING ANY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE HEALTH OF YOUR PEOPLE. HOW CAN THE BELOW IMAGE BE ACCEPTABLE?

CAN YOU REALLY TELL ME THAT YOU WOULD DARE TO CYCLE IN THAT LANE, NEVER MIND THAT A CHILD COULD CYCLE THERE! EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO CHANGE THIS DANGEROUS LAYOUT, AND THIS INCLUDES MORE THAN ANYTHING, ADDING SAFE CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE INTO THE FUTURE PROJECTS INCLUDING THIS ONE.

THIS PLAN IS IN TOTAL CONTRAST WITH THE NEW BIKE SCHEME STARTING SOON IN BELFAST. HOW CAN YOU START A BIKE SCHEME BUT CONTINUE TO MAKE THE ROAD AN UNSAFE PLACE FOR CYCLISTS. IT SHOULD BE SAFE FOR YOUR GRANNY AND IT SHOULD BE SAFE FOR A CHILD. THERE'S NOTHING STOPPING THEM BEING THERE.

THIS PLAN NEEDS TO BE RE-PLANNED SO IT CAN BE DONE RIGHT AS IT WILL GUARANTEED NOT BE FIXED AFTERWARDS. DO NOT GO AHEAD WITH THIS WITHOUT CONSULTING THE CYCLING POLICE (WHOEVER THEY MAY BE) AND ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE BUY IN FROM THE PEOPLE WHO RISK THEIR LIVES (AND LOSE THEIR LIVES) ON THE ROADS EVERY DAY - THE CYCLISTS.

CLEARLY NOBODY WHO PLANNED THIS CYCLES HERE. SHARED BUS LANES ARE NOT A SOLUTION!! NO CYCLIST WANTS TO SIT BEHIND A BUS, NOR DO THEY WANT TO BE SURROUNDED BY BIG HUGE BULKY FAST PACED BUSES THAT CUT IN AND OUT TRYING TO OVERTAKE US. NOR DO

BUSES WANT THIS SOLUTION. IT DOESN'T IMPROVE LIFE FOR THE VERY PEOPLE YOU ARE TRYING TO BLOSSOM, THE CYCLIST AND THE BUS USER. HOPING TO HEAR FROM YOU SOON TO GET SOME REASSURANCE ON THIS. A CONCERNED CITIZEN.

Cycling Provision:

The proposals presented for consultation were developed in consultation with DRD Cycling Unit and Sustrans.

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Emer Bussman)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Emer Bussman)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.13	Objection number	OBJ13
Objectors Name	David Hembrow
Date submitted	06 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I'M WRITING ABOUT THE PLANS FOR THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE IN BELFAST. THE REASON WHY I AM DOING SO IS THAT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE DESIGNER HAS NOT UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT TAKES TO CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CYCLING AND WALKING.

ON-ROAD CYCLE-LANES, ADVANCED STOP LINES, CENTRAL CYCLE LANES TO ACCESS ADVANCED STOP LINES AND BUS STOP DESIGNS AS FEATURED IN THE PLANS ARE ALL ASSOCIATED WITH INJURIES TO CYCLISTS. NONE OF THESE FEATURES ARE REAL INFRASTRUCTURE, THEY ARE MERELY PAINT AND PAINT DOES NOTHING TO PREVENT MOTOR VEHICLES FROM INJURING CYCLISTS.

THE BICYCLE STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND SAYS "WE ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING A NETWORK OF HIGH QUALITY, DIRECT, JOINED UP ROUTES. WE WANT TO MAKE THE BICYCLE AN ATTRACTIVE, OBVIOUS MODE OF TRANSPORT, AND TO HELP THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO CYCLE, BY HAVING HIGH QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH PROVIDES GREATER PRIORITY FOR THE BICYCLE".

UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS NO SIGN OF THAT IN THE CURRENT PLANS. HAVE THE PLANNERS FORGOTTEN WHO CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

ARE? NOT THRILL SEEKERS, BUT JUST NORMAL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TRYING TO GET FROM A TO B.

A SIMPLE TEST FOR PLANNERS: CONSIDER IF YOU WOULD FEEL SAFE CYCLING ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT YOU DESIGN. WOULD YOU WANT YOUR SPOUSE TO USE IT? YOUR CHILD? YOUR PARENTS? IF NOT THEN DON'T EXPECT OTHER PEOPLE TO WANT TO USE IT.

YOU CAN READ MORE ABOUT THE PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE TYPE OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROPOSED FOR THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

[HTTP://WWW.AVIEWFROMTHECYCLEPATH.COM/SEARCH/LABEL/ON-ROAD%20CYCLE-LANES](http://www.aviewfromthecyclepath.com/search/label/on-road%20cycle-lanes)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW TO DESIGN TRULY SAFE INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH WILL ENCOURAGE EVERYONE IN BELFAST TO CYCLE, IN LINE WITH THE NORTHERN IRELAND BICYCLE STRATEGY, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH. WE RUN REGULAR STUDY TOURS IN THE NETHERLANDS IN WHICH IMPORTANT FEATURES OF GOOD DESIGN ARE DEMONSTRATED.

AND PLEASE DO NOT GO AHEAD WITH THIS DEVELOPMENT UNTIL IT HAS BEEN REVISED SO THAT IT DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE OR FORCE THEM TO HAVE TO USE MOTOR VEHICLES TO MAKE THEIR JOURNEYS.

Cycling Provision:

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (David Hembrow)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (David Hembrow)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.14	Objection number	OBJ14
	Objectors Name	Greg Keeffe
	Date submitted	07 March 2015
	NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

HAVING SEEN THE PLANS FOR YORK STREET AND HAVING STUDIED THE PROVISION FOR CYCLISTS IN THE SCHEME, I AM WRITING TO VOICE MY OPPOSITION TO THE SCHEME.

THE COMPLETE LACK OF ENGAGEMENT WITH CYCLIST GROUPS AND THE UTILISATION OF THE VERY MINIMUM IN TERMS OF PROVISION WOULD SEEM TO ME TO BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE.

CYCLING IS THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORT IN THE CITY. MANY CITIES ARE REMOVING MOTORISED PROVISION TO MAKE SPACE FOR CYCLISTS. RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT SEGREGATION FOR CYCLISTS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN CHANGING PEOPLE'S MODE OF TRANSPORT. BELFAST HAS A CHANCE TO MAKE A SEA-CHANGE IN ITS MODAL MIX WHICH THE CURRENT SCHEME TOTALLY MISSES.

I HOPE YOU WILL LISTEN TO ME AND OTHER DISSENTERS AND REVIEW THE SCHEME AND PRIORITISE CYCLING AND PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT RATHER THAN THE CAR.

Cycling Provision:

The proposals presented for consultation were developed in consultation with DRD Cycling Unit and Sustrans.

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Greg Keefe)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Greg Keefe)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.15	Objection number	OBJ15
	Objectors Name	Niamh Collins
	Date submitted	07 March 2015
	NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

MY COMMENTS ARE BRIEF. MY MAIN CONCERN IS THE LACK OF SEGREGATED, MAINTAINED CYCLE PATHS ON THIS PROPOSAL. AFTER AVAILING OF THE FREE CYCLE TRAINING OFFERED BEFORE THE LAUNCH OF THE BELFAST BIKE SCHEME, USING ADVANCE STOP LINES AND BUS LANES IS REALLY INADEQUATE FOR THE LESS EXPERIENCED COMMUTING CYCLIST ESPECIALLY ON BUSIER ROUTES. THESE CYCLISTS WILL NEVER BECOME EXPERIENCED IF THE ROADS SIMPLY DO NOT OFFER A SAFER ROUTE FOR CYCLISTS. THIS WILL PUT CYCLISTS OFF COMMUTING VIA BICYCLE. THIS SURELY GOES AGAINST GOVERNMENT TARGETS FOR

HEALTHY LIVING AND INCREASING LEVELS OF CYCLING. THERE MUST BE A SOLUTION TO IMPROVE COMMUTING FOR ALL AND NOT JUST MOTORISTS.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Niamh Collins)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Niamh Collins)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.16	Objection number	OBJ16
	Objectors Name.....	Chris Murphy
	Date submitted.....	08 March 2015
	NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I HAVE LOOKED AT THE PROPOSALS AND AM DISAPPOINTED AT THE LACK OF FORESIGHT AND PLANNING FOR CYCLING.

THERE IS ROOM WITHIN THE EXISTING PLANS TO ALLOW FOR PROPER SEGREGATION. PAINT IS NOT SUFFICIENT.

I FAIL TO SEE HOW THE CURRENT PLANS FULFIL THE MINISTER'S VISION OF ENABLING AND INCREASING CYCLING.

INDEED, I NOTE THAT THE NI GREENWAYS BLOG HAS HIGHLIGHTED THIS COMPLETE LACK OF AMBITION; "MAINTAIN ACCESS" FOR CYCLING – POTENTIALLY A TRAGICALLY MISSED OPPORTUNITY, JUST AS THE GROSVENOR RD BRIDGE DEVELOPMENT IGNORED CYCLING.

I FULLY ENDORSE THE VIEW EXPRESSED ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL BY THE NI GREENWAYS BLOG.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Chris Murphy)

The concerns of the Objectors and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Chris Murphy)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.17 Objection number..... OBJ17
Objectors Name.....Colin McDowell (On behalf of Jack Kirk Garage)
Date submitted..... 06 March 2015
NIMVO plot number 30, 31

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I WRITE TO ADVISE THAT I AM INSTRUCTED TO ACT ON BEHALF OF MR JEFF RUTHERFORD, PROPRIETOR OF JACK KIRK GARAGE, LOCATED AT 26 SHIPBUOY STREET, BELFAST WHICH IS AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSALS FOR THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

MY CLIENT ADVISES ME THAT THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE WILL HAVE A CATASTROPHIC IMPACT ON HIS PROPERTY AND BUSINESS TO THE EXTENT THAT PROPERTY AND BUSINESS WILL BE VESTED AND EXTINGUISHED.

TransportNI confirms that the extent of vesting includes the property of Mr Rutherford (Jack Kirk Garage).

THE NATURE OF MY CLIENT'S BUSINESS MEANS IT CANNOT BE EASILY RELOCATED AND THEREFORE ON HIS BEHALF I WRITE TO FORMALLY OBJECT TO THE PROPOSALS IN THEIR CURRENT FORMAT AND TO THE PROPOSED VESTING ORDER WITH THE REASONING SET OUT BELOW:

WE HAVE ACTED ON BEHALF OF MR RUTHERFORD AND UNDERTAKEN EXTENSIVE SEARCHES OF THE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY MARKET WITH A VIEW TO ESTABLISHING WHETHER IT IS FEASIBLE TO RELOCATE THE EXISTING BUSINESS TO ANOTHER PREMISES. HAVING EXHAUSTED ALL POSSIBILITIES WE ARE SATISFIED THAT THERE ARE NO OTHER PREMISES OFFERING AN AFFORDABLE, FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE EXISTING PREMISES AND THEREFORE THE VESTING OF THIS PROPERTY WILL INVOLVE TOTAL EXTINGUISHMENT OF THE EXISTING BUSINESS.

THE EXISTING JACK KIRK BUSINESS HAS BEEN TRADING AT THIS LOCATION SINCE 1975 UNDER THE CURRENT OWNERSHIP FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS AND HAS THEREFORE BUILT UP A SIGNIFICANT LEVEL OF GOODWILL AND TRADE OVER THIS PERIOD. THIS GOODWILL IS A

COMBINATION NOT ONLY OF THE SKILLS OF THE STAFF INVOLVED BUT ALSO AS A RESULT OF THE STRATEGIC LOCATION OF THE PROPERTY WHERE THE CUSTOMER BASE IS DRAWN FROM EVERY PART OF BELFAST AND FROM A WIDER RADIUS UP TO 30 MILES FROM THE CITY CENTRE.

THE CURRENT BUSINESS PROVIDES EMPLOYMENT FOR 4 FULL TIME STAFF WHICH WILL BE LOST AS A RESULT OF THE VESTING ORDER AND FURTHERMORE THE CURRENT TRADING LEVEL PROVIDES SERVICES TO UP TO 10 CUSTOMERS A DAY, 5 DAYS A WEEK.

THE CURRENT PROVISIONS FOR COMPENSATION UNDER A VESTING ORDER WILL NOT ADEQUATELY REFLECT THE TRUE VALUE OF THE PREMISES WHICH HAVE BEEN SPECIFIED TO A VERY HIGH STANDARD NOR WILL IT PROVIDE SATISFACTORY COMPENSATION FOR THE TRUE GOODWILL OF THE BUSINESS AND THEREFORE MR RUTHERFORD WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY FINANCIALLY COMPROMISED.

FOR THE REASONS ABOVE WE THEREFORE FEEL THAT RECONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CURRENT PROPOSAL TO EXCLUDE MY CLIENT'S PREMISES FROM THE VESTING PROPOSALS.

WE TRUST THAT YOU WILL ACCEPT THIS INFORMATION IN THE GOOD FAITH THAT IT HAS BEEN PROVIDED AND GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO AN AMENDMENT OF THE CURRENT PROPOSALS.

TransportNI recognises and accepts that the Proposed Scheme would require the compulsory acquisition of the property and associated lands, and acknowledges the personal impact this would have on the registered landowner(s).

Development priorities

The existing junction consists of a signalised gyratory 'box' system with traffic signals at each corner, serving over 100,000 traffic movements per day. It is a source of traffic congestion and requires careful traffic management, particularly in peak periods, to ensure that the gyratory system does not become blocked, as this would result in significant traffic delays.

The existing junction is therefore considered a 'bottleneck' on the Strategic Road Network in accordance with the definition established by the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, i.e.:

"...where localised restrictions cause undue congestion and thereby delay for freight, public transport and cars."

The programme to improve transport links in Northern Ireland has been developed and is based on a series of key documents which include:

- The 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone';
- 'Moving Forward: The Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement' published in 1998;
- 'Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 - Shaping our Future' published in 2002;
- 'Regional Development Strategy 2035 – Building a Better Future' published in 2012;
- 'Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012' published in 2012;
- 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation', published in 2012;

- 'Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015' published in 2005;
- 'Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015' (BMTP) published in 2004;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018;
- Investment Delivery Plan for Roads;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021; and
- Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015;

The Regional Transportation Strategy recognises the importance of removing bottlenecks on the Key Transport Corridors. The bottleneck at the York Street Interchange is identified in the BMTP and the Consultation Document '*Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015*' published in 2006.

Extent of Vesting

With regard to the extent of vesting, the development of the Proposed Scheme has been undertaken in line with the engineering requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. Requirements therein for horizontal and vertical road geometry, along with considerations in relation to the buildability of the Proposed Scheme, have required the proposed M3 to Westlink interchange link to be aligned through lands registered to the objector.

Compensation

TransportNI would offer the registered landowner(s) appropriate compensation as independently assessed by the District Valuer, who acts on behalf of TransportNI to negotiate with the landowner and/or his agent to determine compensation for land lost to a new road scheme. Depending on the particular circumstances, compensation can be claimed under the following categories (Heads of Claim): (i) the value of the land taken; (ii) severance and injurious affection; (iii) disturbance; and (iv) fees.

Compensation following compulsory acquisition of land is based on the principle of equivalence. The registered landowner(s) should be no worse off in financial terms after the acquisition than before. Valuation would include the financial impact on the property as well as land value. The Proposed Scheme cannot be advanced without the purchase of the lands in the Vesting Order.

TransportNI is unable to directly comment on compensation matters, as these would be the subject of negotiation between the owner(s) and the District Valuer.

In the event that the District Valuer and registered landowner(s) or his agent are unable to agree the compensation due, the subject of compensation can be referred to the Lands Tribunal for determination, with TransportNI covering the reasonable costs of representation for the registered landowner(s).

Inspectors' Comments (Colin McDowell on behalf of Jack Kirk Garage)

The concerns of the Objectors and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.2.18 Objection number..... OBJ18
Objectors Name..... Colette McKernan/Brendan McKernan, Focus Security Solutions
Date submitted..... 09 March 2015
NIMVO plot number20

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

WE WRITE TO OBJECT TO THE PROPOSED DRAFT ORDERS AND SUBSEQUENT NOTICE OF VESTING AS ADVISED TO US IN YOUR LETTERS OF 27 JANUARY AND 28 JANUARY 2015 WHICH AFFECTS PREMISES LEASED BY US ON 130-132 CORPORATION STREET, BELFAST.

FOCUS SECURITY SOLUTIONS IS AN ESTABLISHED BUSINESS OF 13 YEARS AND SINCE ITS FORMATION HAS BEEN LOCATED IN THIS GENERAL LOCATION. FROM 2002 TO 2006 THE ORGANISATION LEASED ACCOMMODATION IN MIDLAND BUILDING, YORK STREET, BEFORE RELOCATING IN APRIL 2006 TO OUR CURRENT PREMISES IN CORPORATION STREET.

THE BUSINESS STRATEGICALLY OPERATES FROM THIS LOCATION, BECAUSE WE ARE ON THE CUSP OF THE M1, M2 AND M3. OUR CLIENT BASE GEOGRAPHICALLY COVERS THE WHOLE OF THE PROVINCE AND OUR MAIN SUPPLIERS ARE LOCATED WITHIN A 5 MILE RADIUS OF THE PREMISES IN ALL DIRECTIONS. THIS PROVIDES FOR OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES IN TERMS OF OUR ENGINEERING TEAM GETTING QUICKLY TO CLIENT SITES AND FOR OUR SUPPLIERS TO PROMPTLY DELIVER EQUIPMENT TO US, OFTEN AT SHORT NOTICE.

THE BUILDING WAS RENOVATED ENTIRELY IN 2006 AND IS PERFECT FOR OUR NEEDS IN TERMS OF ITS LOCATION, FACILITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY. WE ARE THE SOLE TENANT OF THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE PREMISES, WHICH IS CIRCA 1500 SQ FEET AND COMPRISES BESPOKE OFFICE SPACE, STORE ROOMS AND WASTE STORAGE FACILITIES. THE SIDE ENTRANCE OF THE PREMISES, ON TRAFALGAR STREET, HAS BOTH A SIDE ENTRANCE DOOR AND A LOADING BAY ENTRANCE TO ALLOW FOR THE LOADING AND UNLOADING OF EQUIPMENT TO THE STOREROOMS LOCATED IN THIS AREA OF THE BUILDING. WHILE THERE ARE NO PARKING FACILITIES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE PREMISES ON CORPORATION STREET, TRAFALGAR STREET HAS OFF STREET PARKING WHICH CAN BE USED FOR OUR OFFICE STAFF, ENGINEERS AND VISITORS.

THE FRONTAGE OF THE PREMISES IS ON CORPORATION STREET HAS APPROXIMATELY 12,000 VEHICLES PASSING ON A DAILY BASIS, ALLOWING US TO PROMOTE THE BUSINESS TO THE PASSING TRAFFIC. THE REAR OF THE PREMISES WHICH ALSO HAS SIGNAGE, IS VISIBLE FROM THE SLIP ROAD OFF THE M2 AND FROM THE M3 FLYOVER. AGAIN THIS PROVIDES US WITH MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE OUR BUSINESS.

WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS CURRENTLY NO ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION IN THIS GENERAL AREA WHICH AFFORDS US THE SAME LEVEL OF SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR THE REASONS DENOTED ABOVE.

THE RELOCATION TO ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION WILL CAUSE SIGNIFICANT DISRUPTION TO OUR BUSINESS ACTIVITY. WE ARE A SMALL ORGANISATION WITH CURRENTLY 12 EMPLOYEES, COMPRISING TWO DIRECTORS, FOUR OFFICE STAFF AND SIX ENGINEERS. THE TIME WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED BY THE TWO DIRECTORS, TO FACILITATE A MOVE WILL CAUSE AN ADDITIONAL UNNECESSARY BURDEN AND WILL INEVITABLY MEAN THAT THEY WILL BE UNABLE TO FULLY CONCENTRATE THEIR EFFORTS IN SECURING AND DELIVERING THE OPERATIONAL NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS.

IT IS FOR THE REASONS OUTLINED ABOVE THAT WE WISH TO RAISE OBJECTION TO THE DRAFT ORDERS AND NOTICE OF VESTING OF OUR PREMISES. WE ASK THAT A PUBLIC ENQUIRY IS HELD INTO THE SCHEME AND WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE FURTHER COMMENT TO SUPPORT OUR OBJECTION. PLEASE ALSO KEEP US INFORMED OF ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO THIS PROJECT AS AND WHEN THEY ARISE.

TransportNI recognises and accepts that the Proposed Scheme would require the compulsory acquisition of the property and associated lands, and acknowledges the personal impact this would have on the registered landowner(s).

Development priorities

The existing junction consists of a signalised gyratory 'box' system with traffic signals at each corner, serving over 100,000 traffic movements per day. It is a source of traffic congestion and requires careful traffic management, particularly in peak periods, to ensure that the gyratory system does not become blocked, as this would result in significant traffic delays.

The existing junction is therefore considered a 'bottleneck' on the Strategic Road Network in accordance with the definition established by the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, i.e.:

"...where localised restrictions cause undue congestion and thereby delay for freight, public transport and cars."

The programme to improve transport links in Northern Ireland has been developed and is based on a series of key documents which include:

- The 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone';
- 'Moving Forward: The Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement' published in 1998;
- 'Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 - Shaping our Future' published in 2002;
- 'Regional Development Strategy 2035 – Building a Better Future' published in 2012;
- 'Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012' published in 2012;
- 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation', published in 2012;
- 'Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015' published in 2005;
- 'Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015' (BMTP) published in 2004;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018;
- Investment Delivery Plan for Roads;

- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021; and
- Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015;

The Regional Transportation Strategy recognises the importance of removing bottlenecks on the Key Transport Corridors. The bottleneck at the York Street Interchange is identified in the BMTP and the Consultation Document ‘*Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015*’ published in 2006.

Extent of Vesting

The development of the Proposed Scheme has been undertaken in line with the engineering requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. Requirements therein for horizontal and vertical road geometry, along with considerations in relation to the buildability of the Proposed Scheme, have required the proposed M2 to Westlink interchange link to be aligned through lands registered to the objectors.

Compensation

TransportNI would offer the registered landowner(s) appropriate compensation as independently assessed by the District Valuer, who acts on behalf of TransportNI to negotiate with the registered landowner(s) and/or their agent to determine compensation for land lost to a new road scheme. Depending on the particular circumstances, compensation can be claimed under the following categories (Heads of Claim): (i) the value of the land taken; (ii) severance and injurious affection; (iii) disturbance; and (iv) fees.

Compensation following compulsory acquisition of land is based on the principle of equivalence. The registered landowner(s) should be no worse off in financial terms after the acquisition than before. Valuation would include the financial impact on the property as well as land value. The Proposed Scheme cannot be advanced without the purchase of the lands in the Vesting Order.

TransportNI is unable to directly comment on compensation matters, as these would be the subject of negotiation between the registered owners and the District Valuer.

In the event that the District Valuer and the registered landowner(s) or their agent are unable to agree the compensation due, the subject of compensation can be referred to the Lands Tribunal for determination, with TransportNI covering the reasonable costs of representation for the registered landowner(s).

Public Inquiry

Given the nature of the proposals and the likelihood that a number of the objections could not be resolved, the Minister for Regional Development approved the holding of a Public Inquiry to give TransportNI and the objectors a fair opportunity to be heard and to question the case for and against the Proposed Scheme. The Public Inquiry will be held in Assembly Buildings Conference Centre, 2-10 Fisherwick Place, Belfast commencing on 10th November 2015 at 10.30 am and continuing on such other days as may be determined by the Inspector.

Inspectors’ Comments (Colette McKernan/Brendan McKernan, Focus Security Solutions)

The concerns of the Objectors and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.2.19 Objection number..... OBJ19
Objectors Name.....Michael Greene
Date submitted..... Received 09 March 2015
NIMVO plot number 131

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I'M TERRIFIED BY THE NEW LOOK JUNCTION PROPOSED AT YORK STREET. I'M TERRIFIED FREQUENTLY ON MY BIKE ALREADY. CAN'T THIS AND ALL NEW ROADS BE MADE SAFER FOR CYCLISTS? WITH THE BIKE HIRE SCHEME AND STORMONT TRYING TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVE TRAVEL, THIS LOOKS ACTIVELY DISCOURAGING.

Safety

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great George's Street. It is considered that these changes would benefit non-motorised road users, as they would experience a less intimidating environment.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Michael Greene)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI written responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Michael Greene)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.20 Objection number..... OBJ20
Objectors Name.....Mick Carragher
Date submitted..... 09 March 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I'M VERY PLEASED TO SEE THE NEW BRIDGE IN THE YORK ST PROPOSAL. I AM A REGULAR PEDESTRIAN IN THE AREA WALKING FROM YORKGATE RAIL STATION TO ULSTER UNIVERSITY. THE CURRENT SITUATION IS DESPERATE FOR PEDESTRIANS, DANGEROUS, NOISY AND UNPLEASANT, AND THE SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS WILL ENHANCE THE PEDESTRIAN JOURNEY.

Endorsement of Pedestrian Proposals

TransportNI welcomes your comments in relation to proposed pedestrian provision. As you have recognised, the grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great George's Street. It is considered that these changes would benefit non-motorised road users, as they would experience a less intimidating environment.

For your information, we would also note that the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both the western and eastern sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. As a regular user of the junction, you will appreciate that this proposal would provide improvement from the existing layout.

HOWEVER, THE PLANS FOR CYCLING IN THE PROPOSED SCHEME ARE VERY, VERY POOR. THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO LINK NORTH BELFAST TO THE CITY CENTRE, IN A PERFECT FLAT CYCLING ENVIRONMENT IN A HIGH DENSITY URBAN AREA. THE SCHEME SHOULD HAVE SEPARATED LANES FOR CYCLISTS TO ENCOURAGE ALL TYPES OF CYCLING, INCLUDING CHILDREN, CASUAL COMMUTERS AND PEOPLE USING THE FORTHCOMING CYCLE HIRE SCHEME. HAVE ANY ROAD PLANNERS BEEN TO OTHER EUROPEAN CITIES TO SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING THERE? THE BEST WAY TO ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVES TO THE CAR IS TO CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS. SEPARATED, DEDICATED CYCLE LANES NEED TO BE INCORPORATED INTO THE INTERCHANGE NOW.

Cycling Provision:

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Mick Carragher)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Mick Carragher)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.21 Objection number..... OBJ21
Objectors Name..... Andrew Flemming
Date submitted..... 09 March 2015
NIMVO plot number..... N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I THINK THIS IS A GREAT, AND MUCH NEEDED SCHEME TO HELP REDUCE TRAFFIC BOTTLENECKS IN BELFAST, THIS SCHEME BEING THE MOST IMPORTANT AS IT IS PROBABLY THE BIGGEST BOTTLE NECK IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY, AND BLOCKING OFF DEE STREET JUNCTION AT THE SYDENHAM BYPASS AS PART OF THE SYDENHAM BYPASS WIDENING SCHEME TO A THREE LANE CARRIAGEWAY.

Thank you for your positive comments in relation to the proposed York Street Interchange scheme. As you have noted, the Proposed Scheme would remove the current bottleneck on the strategic road network, as set out in the scheme objectives.

I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE LACK OF CYCLING PROVISION OF THIS SCHEME. YOU SEE, IT SAYS IN THE NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY:

TO MAINTAIN ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS; AND

THERE IS A REAL LACK OF AMBITION OOOZING FROM THESE WORDS, AND UNFORTUNATELY THIS IS REFLECTED IN THE PROPOSALS.

"EXISTING PROVISION FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS ON YORK STREET WOULD BE MAINTAINED AS A MINIMUM, WITH AN EXPECTED IMPROVEMENT FOR NON-MOTORISED USERS AT THE JUNCTIONS FROM THE REMOVAL OF A SIGNIFICANT VOLUME OF TRAFFIC. "

I THINK THAT IN THE FUTURE, CYCLISTS WILL DOMINATE THE LANDSCAPE, THEREFORE, INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FACILITATE THAT. BY FACILITATING IT NOW, THERE WILL BE LESS NEED TO SPEND MONEY ON IT LATER. A NEARBY DEVELOPMENT IS THE ULSTER UNIVERSITY BELFAST CAMPUS WHICH IS RELOCATING FROM JORDANSTOWN. AS PART OF THE PLANS, THERE WILL BE A BICYCLE PARKING FACILITY FOR 200 BICYCLES AT FREDRICK STREET. ONCE MOST OF THE JORDANSTOWN CAMPUS RELOCATES TO BELFAST, THE NUMBER OF PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS IN THE AREA WILL INCREASE DRAMATICALLY. SURELY, A REDESIGN OF THIS FLYOVER IS NEEDED.

I FOLLOW A CYCLIST BLOGGER FROM BELFAST WHO HAS BLOGGED ABOUT THIS PROJECT.

[HTTPS://STRIPYMOGGIE.WORDPRESS.COM/2015/02/05/YORK-STREET-INTERCHANGE-NO-SPACE-FOR-CYCLING/](https://stripymoggie.wordpress.com/2015/02/05/york-street-interchange-no-space-for-cycling/) HE HAS SUGGESTED THE FOLLOWING REDESIGN OF THE FLYOVER TO DEDICATE TWO DEDICATED, PROTECTED CYCLE LANES EITHER SIDE.

I WILL LEAVE YOU WITH A QUOTE FROM HIS BLOG, I ECHO EVERYTHING THAT HE SAYS:

THE CITY CENTRE STRATEGY CALLS FOR PART PEDESTRIANISATION OF THE INNER RING, WITH DUNBAR LINK REIMAGINED AS A TREE-LINED PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY STREET. THE SQUARE BESIDE THE CENTRAL LIBRARY WILL BE PEDESTRIANISED AND THE BUOYS PARK WILL BE USED

FOR OUTDOOR EVENTS. ALL THESE LOCATIONS ARE WITHIN SIGHT OF THE YORK STREET FLYOVER. AND OF COURSE, BIKESHARE DOCKING STATIONS WILL DOT THE AREA.

AND DESPITE CREATING THESE PEOPLE SPACES DRD ARE PLANNING A FLYOVER TO DEAL WITH CURRENT CAR TRAFFIC LEVELS, RATHER THAN DESIGNING FOR THE NEAR FUTURE WHERE PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS WILL DOMINATE THE LOCAL STREETScape. ONCE THE CARS HAVE BEEN DESIGNED INTO THE PLANS IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO GET RID OF THEM. IT IS IMPORTANT THEY RECONSIDER NOW, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

Here's my redesign of the flyover:

The reduced traffic levels mean we can remove one of the northbound lanes and redistribute the space for segregated cycle paths either side, with wide buffer zones. The paths must run from Dock Street to the Inner Ring, with their own traffic lights across the Westlink off-slip and M2 slip road.

The report mentions the significant levels of cycling on Corporation Street, because of the proximity of NCN93 (even with its faults). Design this flyover right and significant numbers of cyclists will use it.

Improve Access For Pedestrians/Cyclists:

The Proposed Scheme has been developed to optimise provision for non-motorised users within the physical constraints of the existing built environment, and the competing engineering constraints of the proposed road links.

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great George's Street. It is considered that these changes, and additional improvements to each of the remaining signalised junctions, would benefit non-motorised road users through improved amenity on these routes.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

For cyclists, it is noted that no dedicated cycling facilities exist on York Street. The Proposed Scheme improves access to the City Centre for cyclists by providing mandatory cycle lanes in each direction.

The proposals presented for consultation are considered to address the potential future demand for pedestrians and cyclists along York Street, following the relocation of the Ulster University campus.

It is noted that the Proposed Scheme does not significantly alter the volumes of traffic travelling northbound on York Street between the junctions with Frederick Street and Dock Street. As such, the existing number of lanes has been carried over into the new layout. It is considered that any further reduction in lane provision could create a future constraint on traffic capacity on the route.

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Andrew Flemming)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Andrew Flemming)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.22	Objection number.....	OBJ22
	Objectors Name.....	Paul Easton
	Date submitted.....	09 March 2015
	NIMVO plot number.....	20

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

WE WRITE TO OBJECT TO THE PROPOSED DRAFT ORDERS AND SUBSEQUENT NOTICE OF VESTING AS ADVISED TO US IN YOUR LETTERS OF 27 JANUARY AND 28 JANUARY 2015 WHICH AFFECTS A PROPERTY OWNED BY SECURITY HOUSE PROPERTY PARTNERSHIP (THE PARTNERSHIP) ON 130-132 CORPORATION STREET BELFAST.

THE PROPOSED ROADS SCHEME WILL CAUSE A SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL LOSS TO THE PARTNERSHIP.

THE PREMISES, FORMERLY A PAINT STORAGE WAREHOUSE, WAS BOUGHT AND RENOVATED IN 2006. IT COMPRISES OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AND STORAGE FACILITIES ON THE GROUND FLOOR AND SEPARATE OFFICE ACCOMMODATION ON THE FIRST FLOOR. SINCE APRIL 2006 UNTIL AUGUST 2014, BOTH FLOORS WERE FULLY OCCUPIED. IN APRIL 2014, THE FIRST FLOOR TENANT DECIDED NOT TO RENEW THEIR LEASE BECAUSE OF THE PROPOSED ROAD SCHEME AND VACATED THE PREMISES IN AUGUST 2014.

IN ADDITION IF THE PROPOSED SCHEME IS GIVEN APPROVAL TO PROCEED, THE PARTNERSHIP WILL LOSE THEIR PROPERTY AND THE OPPORTUNITY OF RETAINING A LONG TERM INVESTMENT. FURTHERMORE, UNTIL SUCH TIMES AS THERE IS A CONFIRMED DECISION ON THIS SCHEME, THE PREMISES WILL MOST LIKELY BE UNSALEABLE AND UNRENTABLE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME COSTS WILL CONTINUE TO BE INCURRED BY THE PARTNERSHIP TO KEEP THE BUILDING IN GOOD GENERAL REPAIR.

TransportNI recognises and accepts that the Proposed Scheme would require the compulsory acquisition of the property and associated lands, and acknowledges the personal impact this would have on the registered landowner(s).

Development priorities

The existing junction consists of a signalised gyratory 'box' system with traffic signals at each corner, serving over 100,000 traffic movements per day. It is a source of

traffic congestion and requires careful traffic management, particularly in peak periods, to ensure that the gyratory system does not become blocked, as this would result in significant traffic delays.

The existing junction is therefore considered a 'bottleneck' on the Strategic Road Network in accordance with the definition established by the Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012, i.e.:

"...where localised restrictions cause undue congestion and thereby delay for freight, public transport and cars."

The programme to improve transport links in Northern Ireland has been developed and is based on a series of key documents which include:

- The 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone';
- 'Moving Forward: The Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement' published in 1998;
- 'Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 - Shaping our Future' published in 2002;
- 'Regional Development Strategy 2035 – Building a Better Future' published in 2012;
- 'Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012' published in 2012;
- 'Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future – A New Approach to Regional Transportation', published in 2012;
- 'Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015' published in 2005;
- 'Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015' (BMTP) published in 2004;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018;
- Investment Delivery Plan for Roads;
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021; and
- Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015;

The Regional Transportation Strategy recognises the importance of removing bottlenecks on the Key Transport Corridors. The bottleneck at the York Street Interchange is identified in the BMTP and the Consultation Document 'Expanding the Strategic Road Improvement Programme 2015' published in 2006.

Extent of Vesting

The development of the Proposed Scheme has been undertaken in line with the engineering requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. Requirements therein for horizontal and vertical road geometry, along with considerations in relation to the buildability of the Proposed Scheme, have required the proposed M2 to Westlink interchange link to be aligned through lands registered to the objector.

Compensation

TransportNI would offer the registered landowner(s) appropriate compensation as independently assessed by the District Valuer, who acts on behalf of TransportNI to negotiate with the registered landowner(s) and/or his agent to determine compensation for land lost to a new road scheme. Depending on the particular circumstances, compensation can be claimed under the following categories (Heads

of Claim) (i) the value of the land taken (ii) severance and injurious affection (iii) disturbance and (iv) fees.

Compensation following compulsory acquisition of land is based on the principle of equivalence. The registered landowner(s) should be no worse off in financial terms after the acquisition than before. Valuation would include the financial impact on the property as well as land value. The Proposed Scheme cannot be advanced without the purchase of the lands in the Vesting Order.

TransportNI is unable to directly comment on compensation matters, as these would be the subject of negotiation between the registered landowner(s) and the District Valuer.

In the event that the District Valuer and registered landowner(s) or their agent are unable to agree the compensation due, the subject of compensation can be referred to the Lands Tribunal for determination, with TransportNI covering the reasonable costs of representation for the registered landowner(s).

WE ASK THAT A PUBLIC INQUIRY IS HELD INTO THE SCHEME AND WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE FURTHER COMMENT TO SUPPORT OUR OBJECTION.

Public Inquiry

Given the nature of the proposals and the likelihood that a number of the objections could not be resolved, the Minister for Regional Development approved the holding of a Public Inquiry to give TransportNI and the objectors a fair opportunity to be heard and to question the case for and against the Proposed Scheme. The Public Inquiry will be held in Assembly Buildings Conference Centre, 2-10 Fisherwick Place, Belfast commencing on 10th November 2015 at 10.30 am and continuing on such other days as may be determined by the Inspector.

Inspectors' Comments (Paul Easton)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

4.2.23	Objection number.....	OBJ23A & OBJ23B
	Objectors Name.....	Mark Hackett
	Date submitted.....	209 March 2015
	NIMVO plot number	N/A

Objection number - OBJ23A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

IN CONNECTION WITH THE DRAFT ORDERS EXHIBIT AND RECENT INFORMATION TALK GIVEN BY DRD TRANSPORT NI AND URS AT NORTH QUEEN STREET, I WRITE WITH THE FOLLOWING ISSUES REGARDING THE HOUSES ON LITTLE GEORGE STREET. THIS LETTER WAS CIRCULATED TO THE RESIDENTS AT LATE NOTICE, THEY HAD ALREADY COMPLETED THEIR GROUP LETTER PROCESS.

1: IN PLACES THE PROPOSALS RAISE THE ROAD UP BETWEEN 600-900MM AND ALSO ONE LANE CLOSER TO MANY OF THE HOUSES. THIS HAS A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE ONLY SUNLIGHT, AMENITY, HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF RESIDENTS, ALONG WITH THAT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS AND CHILDREN IN THESE HOUSES. HOUSING SHOULD AND DOES LAST LONGER THAN ITS CURRENT INHABITANTS.

THE ROAD FURTHER IMPACTS ON THEIR SOUTH AND PRIVATE AMENITY GARDEN ASPECT. GOOD ACCESS TO SUNLIGHT, FRESH AIR VENTILATION AND FREEDOM FROM EXCESSIVE NOISE ARE ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF HEALTHY LIVING, WHICH THE NI EXECUTIVE AND ALL ITS DEPARTMENTS ARE COMMITTED TO AT A HIGH POLICY LEVEL.

I DO NOT BELIEVE THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ASSESSED AND ADDRESSED WITHIN A BEST PRACTICE, PROFESSIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT.

Daylight

TransportNI has completed a Daylight assessment of the Proposed Scheme to determine the impacts, if any, on the adjacent residential properties at North Queen Street, Little Georges Street and Molyneaux Street. The assessment has shown that all living rooms, which are the only occupied rooms of the existing buildings affected by the Proposed Scheme, would still enjoy adequate daylight after the Proposed Scheme is in place.

Amenity

TransportNI accepts that there would be an inevitable perceived disturbance to amenity during the construction phase of the Proposed Scheme, due to transient changes in air quality, noise, visual impact, and local vehicle movements for example. The assessment of these construction-related impacts is described in the various technical chapters in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. There are a number of mitigation measures which would be implemented during the works to limit this impact, as discussed in the respective Mitigation & Enhancement Measures section of those various technical chapters.

In the longer term, post-construction, TransportNI believes that the mitigation proposed within the Environmental Statement, including the landscaping mitigation, would, in time, lessen any perceived loss of amenity.

Health and Well-being

An Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared in relation to the scheme. The ES is a detailed report of the findings of the EIA process. In particular, it predicts the environmental effects that the Proposed Scheme would have, and details the measures proposed to reduce or eliminate those effects. The scope of the environmental assessment has been prepared in relation to the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11 (Environmental Assessment), which considers the impact on both the physical and human environment.

An Air Quality assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 8 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 8.7 of the ES. During the operational phase of the Proposed Scheme, no predicted exceedances of the national objective limit values are expected, thus there would be no significant effects on air quality. Therefore, no specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

Safety

TransportNI notes that Table 4.1 in Volume 1 of the published ES lists drawings (YSI-URS-XX-XX-DR-RE-RR101) that illustrate where vehicle restraint systems

(safety barriers) are proposed, including along the edge of the widened embankment adjacent to the houses in question. These drawings are contained within the separately published Volume 3 of Part 2 of the Proposed Scheme Report (the Engineering, Traffic and Economic Assessment Report).

Road safety is addressed within the design by completing a formal Road Safety Audit process. This process is undertaken in accordance with Standard HD 19 of the DMRB. This has required the completion of a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit by an independent audit team, led by a qualified and experienced Road Safety Auditor. This audit included a review of all reported road traffic collision data within the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme to identify associated trends. The proposed vehicle restraint systems along the verges of the Westlink have been considered as part of the audit process and the Road Safety Auditor has not made any further recommendations in this respect.

Fresh air ventilation

An Air Quality assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 8 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 8.7 of the ES. During the operational phase of the Proposed Scheme, no predicted exceedances of the national objective limit values are expected, thus there would be no significant effects on air quality. Therefore, no specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

Noise

A Noise & Vibration assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 13 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 13.7 of the ES, which includes the approximate length and height of proposed acoustic barriers along part of the Westlink. An indicative location for the proposed acoustic barrier along the Westlink, in the vicinity of Little Georges Street, is shown on Figure 13.3 and on Figure 11.7 (Sheets 2 & 3) in Volume 3 of the ES.

Thin Surface Course System (TSCS), otherwise known as low noise surfacing, would also be provided on interchange links between Westlink, M2 and M3, and the slip roads from these to the local road network. Whilst the noise benefits of this surfacing are mainly evident at higher speeds, there will be some benefits at the lower speeds on the Proposed Scheme. However, no correction for the low noise surfacing has been included in the calculations and, hence, the noise assessment reported in the Environmental Statement is a worst-case assessment. With this mitigation in place, properties in Little Georges Street are predicted to experience decreases in noise levels with the Proposed Scheme in operation, as shown in Figures 13.3 and 13.4 of the ES.

2: THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE, WHILST IT HAS NOT BEEN TOPPED OR MAINTAINED (IT IS IN DRD OWNERSHIP) NONETHELESS PROVIDES PERMEABLE AND NATURAL VISUAL SCREENING, BEING DECIDUOUS IT ALSO ALLOWS SCREENED SUN LIGHT THROUGH THE CANOPY DURING WINTER WHEN LIGHT IS MOST NEEDED FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING. THIS DOES NOT COMPARE WITH THE SOLID BANKS AND WALLS BEING PROPOSED, THE SOLID ASPECTS OF WHICH WILL BE 2 OR 2.5M TALLER THAN THE EXISTING ROAD LINE AND MOVING CLOSER TO THE HOUSING.

Landscape Contrasts

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. Based on this

assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment along the edge of the scheme in the vicinity of Little Georges Street is included in these drawings (Sheets 2 & 3).

Right to Light

TransportNI has completed a Daylight assessment of the Proposed Scheme to determine the impacts, if any, on the adjacent residential properties at North Queen Street, Little Georges Street and Molyneaux Street. The assessment has shown that all living rooms, which are the only occupied rooms of the existing buildings affected by the Proposed Scheme, would still enjoy adequate daylight after the Proposed Scheme is in place.

3: THE RESIDENTS AND HOUSES HAVE AN ESTABLISHED 'RIGHT TO LIGHT'.

Right to Light

As stated above, TransportNI has completed a Daylight assessment of the Proposed Scheme to determine the impacts, if any, on the adjacent residential properties at North Queen Street, Little Georges Street and Molyneaux Street. The assessment has shown that all living rooms, which are the only occupied rooms of the existing buildings affected by the Proposed Scheme, would still enjoy adequate daylight after the Proposed Scheme is in place.

4: WHILST AIR QUALITY ISSUES FOR THE OVERALL AREA MAY APPEAR NEUTRAL TO DRD - IT IS CLEAR THE STUDY HAS NOT BEEN SPECIFIC TO THIS STREET AND ITS HOUSES, THOSE LIVING CLOSEST TO THE MOTORWAY AND BELOW IT.

RESIDENTS CONFIRM THAT AIR QUALITY WAS NOT MONITORED AT THE REAR ELEVATION OF THE HOUSES AND COMPARED TO A STANDARD IN A NEARBY STREET. WITHOUT SUCH 'CONTROL' READINGS, SUCH STUDIES AS DRD HAVE CONDUCTED CANNOT CLAIM TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE IN THIS SPECIFIC CASE.

Air Quality

An Air Quality assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 8 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. The assessment follows the approach set out in DMRB Volume 11, Section 3, Part 1 for a 'Detailed' assessment of local air quality and a 'Simple' assessment of regional impacts.

The air quality assessment has given specific consideration to current conditions and likely future conditions at properties on Little Georges Street. Measurements of existing concentrations of nitrogen dioxide were collected at locations between the rear façade of these properties and the Westlink. The monitoring locations are illustrated on Figure 8.1 in Volume 3 of the Environmental Statement as blue circles and labelled as 'URS Diffusion Tube' 1 and 3.

The measurement data was used to calibrate the performance of the dispersion model that was used to calculate the current and future concentrations of the air pollutants at the nearest façade of all properties in Little Georges Street to the Westlink.

TransportNI is content that it has undertaken a robust air quality assessment in accordance with standard practice.

5: NOTWITHSTANDING THE MAJOR ISSUES NOTED ABOVE, THE LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS ON THE RETAINED BANK ARE NOT DETAILED AND WELL ENOUGH CONSIDERED. AT THE END OF THE BUILDING PROCESS INDIVIDUAL GARDENS WILL SUFFER AND THERE IS NO

PROVISION FOR BETTERMENT OR COMPENSATION IN PROVIDING GOOD QUALITY PLANTING ON A GARDEN BY GARDEN BASIS. GOOD LANDSCAPE CAN COVER MANY ILLS, AND WELL DESIGNED LANDSCAPE AT ALL SCALES WILL BE KEY TO INTEGRATING THIS PROJECT. ONE OBSERVES OTHER PARTS OF THE ROAD NETWORK, IN MORE RURAL AND SUBURBAN AREAS, WHERE LANDOWNERS HAVE BEEN COMPENSATED FOR THE LOSS OF EXISTING HEDGES, LANES, GATEPOSTS AND WALLS.

Landscape Treatment

TransportNI concurs that treatment of the area between the Little Georges Street properties and the Westlink would require careful consideration as the scheme design progresses.

Based on the Landscape & Visual assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment in the vicinity of Little Georges Street is included in these drawings (Sheets 2 & 3).

Compensation

Where applicable, compensation would be offered in accordance with the provisions of the relevant legislation (see the Land Acquisition and Compensation (NI) Order 1973). No residential properties at Little Georges Street, Molyneaux Street or North Queen Street adjacent to the Proposed Scheme have been identified for inclusion within the draft Vesting Order. In addition, no works have been identified at this time that would require loss of existing hedges, lanes, gateposts and walls owned by the residents.

Part II of the Land Acquisition and Compensation (NI) Order 1973 includes a right to compensation for reduction in value caused by the use of public works.

6: THERE HAS BEEN NO EARLY OR DETAILED PROFESSIONAL STUDY OF THE BUILDING ISSUES NOTED ABOVE.

FIRSTLY, AN ASSESSMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE ON THE RETENTION OF THE HOUSES

SECONDLY, IF RETENTION WOULD MEET THE PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS REQUIRED OF DECENT FAMILY HOUSING, WHAT ASPECTS ARE NEEDED TO ENSURE ITS HABITABILITY?

THIRDLY, THE QUESTION OF ROAD ALIGNMENT ADJUSTMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN RAISED AT AN EARLIER STAGE

THIS PROPOSAL HAS BEEN DESIGNED THE 'WRONG WAY AROUND' - DRD HAVE DESIGNED A ROADS AND ENGINEERING SOLUTION, RATHER THAN ASSESS THE CONTEXT FIRST WITH THE RELEVANT PROFESSIONALS. (WHO IN THIS CASE OF EXISTING HOUSES AND BUILDINGS COULD ONLY BE FULLY QUALIFIED ARCHITECTS)

IF SUCH AN ASSESSMENT BY A PROFESSIONAL RIBA ARCHITECT SUGGESTS THE HOUSES COULD BE RETAINED AND MEET DECENT HOUSING NEEDS (I EXPRESS MY PROFESSIONAL DOUBTS REGARDING THIS) THEN A PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL STUDY SHOULD SPECIFY AND AGREE THE MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE LIGHT, SUNLIGHT, AIR, NOISE AND GARDEN AMENITY ISSUES. I BELIEVE SUCH A PROCESS IS NECESSARY IF TRANSPORT NI AND URS ARE TO FULFIL THEIR PROFESSIONAL 'DUTY OF CARE' AND MEET REGULATIONS.

SUCH A DRD EMPLOYED ARCHITECT SHOULD ACT WITHIN THEIR CODE OF CONDUCT AND DUTY OF CARE TO RESIDENTS, NOT DRD, AS THEIR

PRIMARY PROFESSIONAL CONCERN. I CITE THE RELEVANT RIBA CODE OF CONDUCT ISSUES SUCH AN ARCHITECT WILL BE REQUIRED TO ADDRESS IN AN APPENDIX.

Retention of existing residential properties at Little Georges Street

The existing residential properties at Little Georges Street were constructed following completion of the original Westlink scheme. As occupied residential properties, they were identified as a constraint on the development of the Proposed Scheme since the current commission was formalised in 2008. TransportNI has developed the Proposed Scheme to ensure that these properties will not be subject to vesting and subsequent demolition as part of the works.

The environmental effects that the Proposed Scheme would have on the retained properties has been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11 (Environmental Assessment), which considers the impact on both the physical and human environment. The published ES is a detailed report of the findings of the EIA process. In particular, it predicts the environmental effects that the Proposed Scheme would have, and details the measures proposed to reduce or eliminate those effects. The assessment process has been completed by a team of competent professionals from URS – an IEMA accredited organisation.

On the basis of the findings from the completed EIA, TransportNI does not consider that the impacts of the Proposed Scheme are such that the assessment on the retention of the houses needs to be reconsidered.

The alignment of the Proposed Scheme has been developed in line with the engineering requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. Deviation from the geometry incorporated within the Proposed Scheme for the identified road link would result in a reduction of road design standards. As such, the Proposed Scheme represents an optimum solution within its defined physical constraints.

Relevant Authority for Development of Proposed Scheme

Under the provisions of The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 (as amended), TransportNI remains the relevant statutory body for the development of strategic road improvement schemes in Northern Ireland, in consultation as appropriate with the other government departments.

7: TRANSPORT NI SHOULD RESOURCE THE RESIDENTS TO HAVE ACCESS TO INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUES THE PROPOSAL IS INFLECTING ON THEM.

Independent Technical and Financial Assistance

In line with current policy, TransportNI does not provide financial assistance to parties objecting to the draft Orders and ES.

8: FINALLY - AND MOST RELEVANT FOR THE EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC FUNDS. THE RECENT PROPOSALS FOR THE ELEVATED MOTORWAY AT THIS STREET INDICATE:

- **DIFFICULT AND RESTRICTED EXCAVATION BETWEEN EXISTING HOUSING AND A MOTORWAY**
- **THE INSTALLATION OF TWO PILES AT FREQUENT CENTRES. (ARE THESE BORED NOT DRIVEN PILES?)**
- **A LARGE CONTINUOUS PILE CAP SLAB.**
- **OFF THIS IS BUILT A SPECIALISED STEEP SLOPE.**

- **AN EXPENSIVE SOUND BARRIER (POSSIBLY PERSPEX ALTHOUGH THIS WILL GET DIRTY AND GRUBBY)**
- **THE COSTS INVOLVED IN ADDRESSING POINT 6.**
- **ACOUSTIC GLAZING, VENTILATION AND SOUND REDUCTION MEASURES, ENHANCED LANDSCAPE**

I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THE LINEAR COST OF PILING, GROUND SLAB, RETAINING STRUCTURES AND MITIGATING MEASURES WILL NOT EXCEED THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTIES TO REBUILD OR REHOUSE IN MORE APPROPRIATE LOCATION.

SHOULD THIS MATTER NOT BE RESOLVED, I SUGGEST IT IS REFERRED TO THE AUDITORS FOR REVIEW, IS THIS A GOOD USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS?

AS MENTIONED IN THE RECENT MEETING, SUCH A SOLUTION WOULD NOT BE ADVOCATED, I BELIEVE, IN ANY OTHER PART OF THE EU. WHAT THIS ILLUSTRATES IS A FAILURE, IN MY VIEW, IN JOINED UP GOVERNANCE WHERE THE URBAN DESIGN / COST / IMPACTS AND BENEFITS FOR THE CITY WOULD BE ASSESSED IN A HOLISTIC MANNER, BY ALL AGENCIES IN A TEAM APPROACH.

MOTORWAY FUNDS ULTIMATELY COME FROM EU FUNDS, I DOUBT THAT THE EU WILL WANT PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWCASING CHILDREN PLAYING IN THE SHADOW (LITERALLY) OF THIS ROAD IN 2023 AS AN EXAMPLE OF EU INFRASTRUCTURE QUALITY.

Expenditure of Public Funds

TransportNI is content that a robust assessment has been made of the proposed retaining solution, taking into account the relevant engineering constraints. It should be noted that a number of the engineering features listed in your response would potentially be required for any earthwork solution at that location, based on reported ground conditions. The completed Environmental Impact Assessment has not identified a requirement for the provision of acoustic glazing or ventilation measures in the Proposed Scheme.

The results of the COBA economic assessment reported in the published Proposed Scheme Report indicate that the Proposed Scheme, including the associated costs of the proposed retaining solution at Little Georges Street, represents good value for money with an overall Net Present Value of £99.780m and a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334.

FINALLY, WE WOULD ASK THE ENGINEERS AND PEOPLE WORKING ON THIS PROJECT TO REFLECT ON THEIR DESIGNS AND POSITIONS FROM A HUMAN AND PROFESSIONAL POINT OF VIEW, AND WORK WITH THE RELEVANT PROFESSIONALS TO PROPOSE HUMANE SOLUTIONS THAT RESPECT THE RIGHT OF LOCAL PEOPLE TO DECENT HEALTH, HOME AND FAMILY LIFE.

Wider Team

Under the provisions of The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 (as amended), TransportNI remains the relevant statutory body for the development of strategic road improvement schemes in Northern Ireland, in consultation as appropriate with the other government departments.

Humane Solutions

The development of the Proposed Scheme and the subsequent completed Environmental Impact Assessment has been completed by a team of competent and highly qualified professionals, in consultation with relevant professionals in statutory

and non-statutory organisations. The environmental effects that the Proposed Scheme would have on the retained properties has been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11 (Environmental Assessment), which considers the impact on both the physical and human environment.

Objection number - OBJ23B

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

IN CONNECTION WITH THE DRAFT ORDERS EXHIBIT AND RECENT INFORMATION TALK GIVEN BY DRD TRANSPORT NI AND URS AT NORTH QUEEN STREET WE RESPOND AS FOLLOWS IN SHORT FORM:

WE APPRECIATE THAT DRD AND THEIR CONSULTANTS HAVE TAKEN ON A NUMBER OF IDEAS DURING THE LAST PHASE, INCLUDING MOVING THE BANGOR/WESTLINK CONNECTION AND THE REMOVAL OF THE ACCESS TO CORPORATION STREET. BOTH THESE MEASURES ALLOW URBAN DESIGN TO IMPROVE FOR THESE STREETS.

TransportNI notes your support of the changes made to the Proposed Scheme, following previous consultations.

THE INTERCHANGE IS COMPLEX AND WOULD BENEFIT FROM A MORE OPEN AND 'CO-DESIGN' APPROACH BY MORE PROFESSIONALS AND THOSE WITH EXPERTISE. THIS WOULD INCLUDE THE CYCLING LOBBY AND THEIR POINTS RAISED REGARDING LANES ON YORK ST. WE SHARE THE VIEW THAT CYCLE LANES NEED TO BE RAISED, NOT PART OF THE ROAD SURFACE AND SHOULD BE SEPARATED FROM BUSES AND CARS. THEY ALSO THEN ACT AS A USEFUL BUFFER LAYER TO THE PAVEMENTS. THE USE OF HEDGES AND LINEAR BUFFER GREEN LANDSCAPE SHOULD BE USED AT KEY AREAS TO SOFTEN THE VERY WIDE VISUAL IMPRESSION AND DOMINANCE OF CARS/VEHICLES.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Landscaping Proposals

As you will be aware, since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report (including the Environmental Statement) TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. The SAG has developed options to improve scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation through the proposed enhancement of, amongst other things, current landscaping proposals.

IN A £130-£160M PROJECT IT IS NOT CREDIBLE TO CLAIM EVERY IMPROVEMENT FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND THE CITY CANNOT BE CONSIDERED FOR COST REASONS - THESE ISSUES ARE NOT BEING TESTED, AND WE CAN POINT TO MANY PLACES WERE ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION SAVINGS COULD BE MADE. THE SCHEME IS A 'ROADS ONLY' SOLUTION - BECAUSE IT IS BEING DESIGNED ONLY WITH THOSE PROFESSIONALS AT THE CORE. THE TEAM NEEDS TO BROADEN, AND

NEEDS THE NEW MEMBERS TO GIVE EQUAL WEIGHT, AND RESPONSIBILITY TO DELIVER QUALITY AND SAFETY IN THEIR TERMS OF THEIR DISCIPLINE.

Non-Motorised User Audit Process

The Proposed Scheme has been developed to optimise provision for non-motorised users within the physical constraints of the existing built environment, and the competing engineering constraints of the proposed road links.

In accordance with Standard HD42 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, the design team has completed the non-motorised user audit process. Its objectives are to:

- encourage all reasonable opportunities to improve the service offered to non-motorised users;
- prevent conditions for non-motorised users being worsened by the introduction of the Proposed Scheme; and
- document design decisions that affect non-motorised users.

It is considered that the Proposed Scheme would enhance access to the City Centre for non-motorised users and public transport by the inclusion of northbound and southbound cycle lanes and a southbound bus lane. In addition, it is considered the local community would benefit from improved continuity on footway links along York Street, the reduction in crossing widths, and the removal of significant traffic volumes from the remaining junctions.

Relevant Authority for Development of Proposed Scheme

Under the provisions of The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 (as amended), TransportNI remains the relevant statutory body for the development of strategic road improvement schemes in Northern Ireland, in consultation as appropriate with the other government departments.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF LOCAL ISSUES AT NORTH QUEEN STREET WHERE THE PROJECT HAS SIMPLY NOT EMPLOYED THE APPROPRIATE CARE. THIS HAS BEEN DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE.

Landscape Treatment

TransportNI concurs that treatment of the North Queen Street bridge area would require careful consideration as the scheme design progresses.

Based on the Landscape & Visual assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment in the vicinity of North Queen Street bridge is included in these drawings (Sheet 2). This includes proposed enhanced lighting under the bridge, and proposed woodland screen planting adjacent to the new housing site at the former PSNI station.

North Queen Street Bridge

As you will be aware, since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report (including the Environmental Statement) TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation.

The extension of the North Queen Street bridge is a matter which the SAG has considered. The group has endorsed the provision of feature lighting to the undercroft area, use of Aluminum Composite Material (ACM) graphics panels on the

existing abutments (designed with local community input) and decorative acoustic barriers along the edge of the structure on both elevations on the Westlink.

TransportNI and their consultants have engaged with the Department of Justice and the Police Service of Northern Ireland to discuss the existing steps and ramps to the north-west corner of the bridge. It was confirmed that the area had benefitted from an improvement scheme to address known anti-social behavior in this location. It is understood that this scheme has been successful in this regard. TransportNI can confirm that the Proposed Scheme would not significantly impact the existing arrangement.

The detailed design of the embankment to the south-west corner of the widened North Queen Street bridge would ensure access is only possible from the Westlink carriageway.

WE HAVE RAISED ELSEWHERE ISSUES RELATING TO MATERIALS, RAILS, LIGHTS AND UNDERPASS DESIGN. AND THE NECESSITY TO LEAD THE DESIGN/BUILD TENDER PROCESS WITH CLEARLY DEFINED SPECIFICATION AND QUALITY.

Strategic Advisory Group

As you will be aware, since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report (including the Environmental Statement) TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation.

Any agreed changes to the finishes within the Proposed Scheme would be appropriately incorporated into the requirements of the construction contract.

THERE IS SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH SIMPLE DETAIL SUCH AS BEFORE AND PROPOSED SPOT LEVELS - THIS IS SUCH BASIC INFORMATION IN DESIGN TO BE READ BY THE PUBLIC THAT ITS OMISSION SEEMS DESIGNED TO CLOUD RATHER THAN ILLUMINATE. THE EXPENSE OF MODELS, RENDER ETC DOES NOT MAKE UP FOR THIS SIMPLE OMISSION.

Table 4.1 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement provides a summary of engineering drawings relevant to the Proposed Scheme and your attention is directed toward drawing nos. YSI-URS-XX-XX-DR-RE-GD001 to GD011 inclusive, which provide details of existing and proposed road levels. These drawings are contained within the separately published Volume 3 of Part 2 of the Proposed Scheme Report (the Engineering, Traffic and Economic Assessment Report).

TransportNI also notes that it has undertaken further consultations, including an on-site demonstration, with local residents to ensure they understand the changes in road levels, particularly along York Street, associated with the Proposed Scheme.

THE FACT THAT OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND COUNCIL HAVE NOT ACTED PROACTIVELY WITH URBAN DESIGN BUDGETS AND TEAM WORKS, DOES NOT OMIT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR DRD TO GO THIS FOR ITS OWN OBJECTIVES.

TransportNI is content that it has met its statutory responsibilities with respect to development of the Proposed Scheme.

THE LANDSCAPE DESIGN IS PARAMOUNT OVER THE WHOLE PROJECT - THERE IS VERY LITTLE EVIDENT THIS HAS BEEN GIVEN ENOUGH EMPHASIS AND BUDGET. THE LANDSCAPE COULD HAVE DISTINCT AREAS AND ACT AS GATEWAYS FOR DRIVERS - AND NEEDS TO BE OF VERY HIGH QUALITY AS IT CONNECTS TO RESIDENTS AND PEOPLE WALKING. THERE SHOULD

BE A VERY LARGE AMOUNT OF TREES (AS CAN BE SEEN IN THE M3/EAST RIVER SECTION)

Based on the Landscape & Visual assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 in Volume 1 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES.

THE PROJECT WILL BE MORE SUCCESSFUL BY ADOPTING A MORE OPEN AND DISCURSIVE DESIGN APPROACH. THERE IS ALSO THE NEED FOR OUTSIDE VOICES AND REVIEW, IN PARTICULAR RELATING TO THE NON ROAD ELEMENTS AND WALKABILITY AND CYCLE PROVISION.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Mr Hackett spoke at the Inquiry on the afternoon of Day 1. He made a further contribution on the afternoon of the 3rd day of the Inquiry. Since there was some overlap these contributions have been combined and edited along with the Department's responses as follows.

'My name is Mark Hackett. I am architect, BSc from Queens University in Architecture and a BArch from the Glasgow School of Art, The Mackintosh School. I worked for two years in Berlin on housing and I have talked quite extensively in planning and architecture courses. I have been on the Board of Place NI, which is the Architectural Centre for Northern Ireland, for around 10 years.

I had a practice Hackett and Hall, later Hackett, Hall and McKnight which I worked in for eight years. We were a small emerging practice but we have a strong reputation and won many awards. I have been elected to the RSUA Council, which is the local branch of the RIBA and, indeed, we designed their offices.

In 2007 we won an open competition for the Mac Art Centre. My role in that project was partner leading a multi-disciplinary team that actually included URS Scott Wilson at the time. They were the Project Managers assisting us. It included BREEAM assessment for energy.

The Mac building is built in sloop which is what this interchange is built on. Sloop is generally the eight metre layer of very poor soil in the Belfast basin. The Mac has 80 metre deep dual thermal piles. It has 170 x 25 metre structural piles. It has a 70 metre deep basement with a pumping station for sewerage. It is the only basement in Belfast designed to the highest code.

I am a Director of the "Forum for an Alternative Belfast". We ceased to exist earlier in the year and we agreed to work on at this project as part of the Strategic Advisory Group on a pro bono basis. We continue to work pro bono along with some of the local community representatives to help them with some of the technical issues. So I have had a number of dealings with various stakeholders over the last six months. Previously we have been looking at this over a number of years.

The Forum for Alternative Belfast first engaged with the York Street Interchange in 2010, and Roy Spiers had a very good input into our summer school, a week long process. Out of that came our first interest in the York St Interchange.

At that point the strategy was trying to bury the development as much as possible. TransportNI were willing to look at an option of trying to conceal the motorway and put lids on parts of the underpasses. Lids would be no longer than 80 metres so they wouldn't become tunnels.

This was worked up in greater detail with 25 University of Ulster students in 2011, and they looked at how to put housing up against the motorway to create green spaces. Around the interchange itself, on publicly owned land, there is at least 1M square feet of developable space. Mostly that might be presumed to be office space or mixed use, but some of it is appropriate for housing.

(Mr. Hackett showed an image of one of the projects showing how the buildings could work against the motorway to hide it and screen it and to restore six streets). In the Forum for Alternative Belfast we called this concept Six Links. It was about restoring, York Street, North Queen Street, Dock Street connecting through to the Titanic Quarter, and then the University at the bottom.

Our interest is really not so much to support the Scheme; we have advocated the least worst options. We tend to agree with a lot of the sentiments of the previous speaker (Mr Acheson), whether in the big picture all of the Scheme is actually needed or whether this is the right approach for the twenty-first century. Given the real politic of Northern Ireland we have taken the approach of trying to come up with the least worst options to try and better the Scheme, and now more recently to present an alternative. I am going to present a number of issues that we see with the Scheme and that I have been pointing out over the last six months.

To give a different context to this economically, about four years ago I sat with a group of people in front of five ministers. They didn't stay in the room very long together, but I think one of them was a representative of DRD. We were trying to get a bit of strategic thinking around north Belfast and the north of the city centre. It was pointed out at that time that about £1 billion was being spent in this area and there was simply no strategic overview.

I would point out that the Strategic Advisory Group, of which I was a member, was not strategic. It was far too much advisory, in other words much of my advice was ignored. It is about trying to put some wider strategic thinking to planning and urban regeneration of which the Interchange is just one part.

So, the interchange is now £130 - £150 million but the University of Ulster is about £250 million new build, and overall between a number of projects you have a potential for £1 billion of spend, but there is simply no Government connectivity about the project. The Strategic Advisory Group did not manage to get any thinking at that larger strategic level. Its remit was tightly defined, dealing with the aesthetics of bridges, lighting, landscape and to a very limited extent, future proofing for development, something that I was advocating.

All this work was done around 2010. We have sought continually to try and work with TransportNI in a more co-design kind of way. We have never really achieved that. Co-design means sitting down at a table together and thrashing out decisions between lots of different people, of which we would only be one. More people need to be brought to that table, chiefly the City Council. The City Council has only recently acquired planning powers. It has not yet gained regeneration powers. It is only starting to get up to speed with the issues around the Interchange. It is not for the want of us trying to bring it to the top of the agenda at City Council, but it is not there yet.

The DSD, the Regeneration Agency is on the way out, as it has known for quite a few years. DSD has had limited funds and limited ability to really bring regeneration thinking to it. The Greater Clarendon Plan has not been published yet. There are issues there, without seeing it, we are not quite sure what it would say. Of course, it

is not taking a proactive approach, it is taking a reactive approach. It is reacting to the roads that are provided by TransportNI rather than trying to shape and steer those.

A lot of our methodology and thinking comes from people like Jan Gale who says cities are for people. I would go further and say people and cities need buildings. A city doesn't exist if you don't have buildings because we can't live in tents. Buildings are there longer than people, but buildings have to serve people and the city has to serve people over many generations, much longer than vehicular transport.

Jan Gale points out what makes a bad walking experience; blank frontages, fences, dead pavements, a lack of variety, a lack of people, a lack of eyes on the street. It is very important when you talk about walking routes around the interchange. The buildings are needed for many reasons. They help people behind the windows, they have lights left on at night possibly on low energy. They bring a level of activity and reflection to the pavement edge. They are vital. This has not been considered properly in this Scheme.

As an Architect I have been continually pointing out things that we would recommend and need to be done within the Scheme to make this happen. This is an example from a number of years ago: Corporation Street. We advocate that is what happens when you put back a street with trees and buildings. It makes an enormous difference, and that should be happening throughout.

In Government minutes of 1971/72, an article by Tim Cunningham recognised that the Belfast Urban Motorway Project cuts off West Belfast, creating a 100 yards clear belt to the west of the city centre. This is just to highlight that this has social and political implications and has caused enormous severance in the City. At the same time a Minority Report by a civil servant from London pointed out that this road would cause 100 years of division in the city. We are halfway through that. We can see in a map of an area of deprivation, that the west and north of the City are the main areas of high deprivation with smaller pockets of deprivation in and around the inner City, with the more affluent south and east as you go out.

What is noticeable is how the red line out to Lisburn becomes a separator with poorer people on one side of the motorway and more affluent people on the other side. In Belfast it becomes the affluent or successful City core that has been largely regenerated, to some extent successfully and continues to strive to do so, but does not connect to inner neighbourhoods in west and north. So the motorway has become a social divider

No other city is building motorways right through their city centre, not in this day and age, certainly not in the western world, and we are still doing it. If we are going to do it we should get it right and we should not be afraid to hold off until we get it right.

With that in mind we took a least worst scenario last year and wrote to DSD, DRD and City Council and we asked them to consider the bare bones issues. This is what the Strategic Advisory Group then looked at; trying to make sure that some of the infrastructure was not going to have very negative effects on the potential for development. I still say that hasn't been achieved.

This is the diagram (projected) of what we were trying to achieve as a minimum. We still don't have a vision of the bridges because TransportNI and URS have not taken on to draw bridges in any great amount of detail.

This is a good example from Paris (projected) which is looking at an underpass from the Louvre, three or four lanes of traffic. When you are on the side you are not aware of this existing because it has been surrounded by stone detail and a thick hedge. This is an example of how excellent detailing could mitigate parts of the Scheme, but I stress that this has not been enacted in the Scheme in the way that I

as an architect would understand it. Somebody drew those details with great care and it was drawn very carefully, designed very carefully, and that is not happening in this Scheme.

In the Strategic Advisory Group we tried to bring up issues like this. I am just trying to illustrate that we were one of the only proactive members of the group who were advocating for buildings, better pavements, trees on streets. We pointed out that York Street Bridge, as proposed, is very bleak. It rises six metres high and will cause urban severance. It has a big hump, it is very wide. The pedestrians and cyclists are very much subservient to that Scheme. It is a very road dominated bridge. It might have some art work and so on, but that is not going to solve the approach and the fact that the lack of buildings and visual policing on the bridge is a problem.

As you go over the bridge at night, especially when the roads are less busy, you are not aware of what is on the other side. The key fear aspect is the reason that you don't design poor structures like that you can't see over. Fear of walking is one of the key issues in Belfast. There is a legacy of fear of walking through these shadows and spaces that we have talked about. How buildings would come up against pavements, the requirement for small retaining walls at pavements, requirement for trees, good lighting, the integration of buildings and so on. These were the sorts of things we were trying to do. We were looking at sites and how they can put in on-street car parking and trees. This is to illustrate that this approach was tried and very little of this, in my view, is reflected in the drawings as opposed to the words of the Scheme. We also tried to help local neighbourhood groups understand the Scheme as we understood it, and also foresee and advocate with elected representatives for change and betterment to the environment.

This is the underpath at North Queen Street. This is a very foreboding dark space. It is one of two. The other is at Dock Street. We are not very happy with the proposals for this, they are not robust enough. We cannot see three dimensional images that we can really judge.

TransportNI and URS are very reticent to have proper peer review and to take peer review on board from other disciplines. The new road will come past Henry Street. This sculpture is actually a small art work which is effectively an interface wall. There are interface problems here to do with marches, but that happens only occasionally.

They are probably more worried about when you go round the corner of Citygate you will be faced with a tunnel effect of about 50 to 60 metres long where you have a blank wall and a blank road on the other side descending to zero. It is creating a dead stretch of road. It will become an antisocial area.

The ramps at North Queen Street only exist because the Westlink was put there. They may not be in DRD ownership, but they only exist because the road cuts through the neighbourhood. The housing on the right-hand side was there before the motorway because there are old stone walls which predate the motorway.

The local community themselves organised for the bricks to be taken off the concrete so that they couldn't be used as missiles. It is really incumbent on TransportNI to clean up the mess it left in 1981 when they completed that section of the Westlink.

One of the real negative points of the Scheme is the impact on the houses at Little Georges Street. The existing planting to that group of houses, especially at the top end is far from being in ideal condition. The planting has got out of control, but it certainly doesn't need taking away. The residents don't want it taken away. The planting on the left thins out and planting doesn't exist at the bottom as the road narrows out. The new road will be higher at the bottom end and will be more visible as well, although there is buffer space for landscaping to be provided.

These slides (projected) illustrate the situation before and after and they show the impact of the road moving higher and closer and the reinforced bank.

We also note the use of two piles and a cap. This is going to be excavated and there will be a series of piles, probably about four piles per house, a pile cap and reinforced slope structure on which you can only plant lighter materials, not trees, and there will be some sort of barrier at the top.

Not only is this affecting the residents on the south side, I should point out that this is their south side. There is a concept called the Right to Light that has not been taken as case law in Northern Ireland but it is commonly used in London and other major cities and it is not the same as the assessment done by TransportNI. It is not about the amount of light or ambient light in the room, it is a legal easement. Again it is not part of Planning Law. In other words the residents could take the Scheme to court and take a civil action to protect their Right to Light, which is the change in angle between the existing and proposed as roughly indicated here.

We would suggest that the landscaping is not touched and if TNI want to sharpen their pencil and try and make the Scheme work in a slightly different way. They could put a structure in that ties back at the upper part of the slope and build in a safety barrier and a sound barrier in one reinforced structure.

The new road will have lorries driving above the eaves of the houses. They sit in a kind of valley where rubbish, various types of emissions will gather and this is in the context of six lanes, or possibly even seven lanes of traffic to the south side of these houses. It is an extreme condition and I don't believe any EU country should be building a road like this in the twenty first century

Dr Benjamin Barrett is a lecturer in air quality science at Kings College London, who is involved in NOx emissions from cars. This expert feels that the removal of the hedge will take away an NOx and NO2 screen. The vegetation does act to collect those particulates and stop them collecting in the basin of the gardens. There is the whole diesel scandal at the moment and I think the Inquiry should note the environment that we are in.

Another piece of evidence that was provided is that in London, Planning Authorities are not allowed to give planning permission to developments that will make emissions worse for residents locally or on a wider strategic level. They mostly advise on large Schemes in London, but it really should apply here.

In 2013 the road layout was slightly different. The merges were different and the impact of the houses was not so great. There is a wider separation zone and you can see on this slide a large sign was placed up above the houses. Sometime in that year it changed and a new lane was put in which is essentially a lay-by lane. That lay-by lane gets narrower and goes right along the slip road. TransportNI would, of course, like to have a lay-by lane but I think that needs to be balanced with the needs of others. There can be a lay-by lane provided at some locations but not, I suggest, at those houses.

The reason for encroaching into these houses is the strip which becomes another hard standing on the right-hand side, and then in the orange line is the existing line. The new roads themselves barely encroach on the current condition and I think that this should be engineered to avoid cutting down those plants.

New Proposal

The next proposal is trying to use the road network you have got to the best effect, and in particular taking the Westlink to Bangor traffic around Dock Street shown in the purple line. Out of that flows a load of simplifications that allow two small bridges to be built rather than one large bridge. It allows land not to be used at Corporation Street and it allows York Street to run more or less at grade. It offers a lot of

enhancements for pedestrians and connectivity, but it offers free flowing traffic without traffic lights.

Yes, there are compromises. There are many issues that need resolved in this Scheme, but in principle I believe it works and I believe that the paper that I have submitted refutes some of the main issues that TransportNI raised about levels etc., which we have corrected. We can keep working on that to prove that in principle the main thrust and intent of the Scheme works.

We have not had access to road engineers. We could not provide that level of detail. We do have an engineer in London who has checked some basic high level things and corrected some issues we were doing.

We look to reduce the area of the Scheme, trying to use the parts of land that are not otherwise used between the train lines, bits of land that are already wasted. Nelson Street has already effectively gone to the City anyway, so use that and design the roads around that.

The two strategic routes routed over it without slip roads and complications, the two bridges therefore become relatively narrow and relatively at right angles to York St. This really helps the environment issues.

First of all taking the M2 from the north sweeping around a 127m radius bend. We were advised that's two steps below minimum standard and about 30 miles an hour, probably for the volume of traffic. This would achieve good flow in peak hours, and that is the main requirement. It should be speed restricted as fast drivers will try to take that corner faster and there should be other means on all of the roads I am talking about. There's a whole series of issues that could be resolved.

It was pointed out to me that TransportNI themselves have taken something like 180 deviations from the handbook, and I suggest that a similar approach can and should be taken with this design. It should be viewed and tempered in the spirit in which it was given, as an alternative for the public good.

We take away the large sweep through Corporation Street and put it into the orange line. We take the Westlink traffic over York St. We take out the slip road to the left onto York Street and move that further along. We make it part of the Bangor route. As you go down the Bangor route, shown in magenta, you are going behind the railway tracks, behind the Union building on land that is currently well away from pedestrians. From that you can either loop out as an option or come out at Dock Street and turn into north Belfast. That gives connectivity for retailers and those in north Belfast. It is slightly further on and probably more where you want to go from anyway, which is Dock Street. It means that York Street, coming through below, can be returned to relatively modest traffic flows and become more pedestrian.

We assume that at that point we are merging with the existing road. We are taking York Street underneath more or less at grade. It will dip just one metre in terms of pedestrians, and two to three metres in terms of the carriageway. The out of town traffic is shown in dark blue. It doesn't have traffic lights on this section. It would have a pedestrian crossing just off the screen, It is led without lights onto the M2 to merge with existing traffic, more or less as is.

This offers great benefit for pedestrians and two proper cycle lanes away from the road. It offers a green space buffer to be provided to the remaining houses with the west of the buffer maintained, and it provides linkages. We would have a pedestrian crossing to connect to York Street Station, and that shows the main thrust of the pedestrian flow and cycle flow.

It allows much more opportunity for buildings to engage with pavements and the city and to effectively try to recover City blocks. Further, we would hope that Corporation

Street has much more potential to become fully regenerated as part of the docks and the various ownerships there.

We have taken on board the notion that we should keep the three lanes of traffic in purple and two in blue and take that off from the slip road, so that is an adjustment from last night. On the north we can achieve 5.5 metres, we think, on the magenta line under Dock Street Bridge. The pavement and cycle lane has roughly four metres clearance. The proper 5.4 clearance is given to lorries on York Street slightly depressed with a hedge and a rail beyond that.

This relationship between truck and vehicle means that pedestrians and cyclists are more empowered, they are away from traffic but can still see it. In the worst eventuality or in the event of emergencies, you can climb over the fence. There is still a connection between pedestrians and passing traffic at some level, which is a good thing. The road above can be designed carefully with its underpasses to minimise the impact on the City. In the distance we are showing new building opportunities. We believe these should be fairly large offices to give off light at night and have that City Centre mode. The long section with a bridge crossing over shows the road dipping down and the pedestrians and cyclists going along more or less level on York Street.

Drawings done last night show that the levels do indeed work in our view. It shows some basic measurements and a reality about dimensions. We have drawn that reasonably carefully but we are not road engineers, so we do need help on that.

TransportNI's own Scheme dips eight metres into the ground. This is the main route from the M2 connecting to Westlink. We propose that it is taken off the existing slip road, taken gently under the Dargan Bridge, lifts as fast as it can over York Street, slightly levels and connects into Westlink as existing with little impact on North Queen Street. We do agree that one extra lane might be needed at North Queen Street. and that is an option that can be considered.

Just to point out that the Dock Street traffic, we would assume, could be routed as the TransportNI Scheme takes dock traffic back out of town a little bit to join the M2 and that is the way it should be done with the modified Scheme.

In this project I think it is very pertinent to note that I was invited to the OGC Gateway Review, one of the highest reviews in Government of the project. I was invited by Roy Spiers, probably as the only non Governmental contract person, to do that. I was invited with Ken Sterritt to the Strategic Advisory Group to do that. I think it is important as well to note that there are about five or six elements of the York Street Interchange which are my ideas. I think that this is recognised by the DRD.

One is the alignment of the Bangor Road setback slightly and adjusted. The second major thing was the two-way running on Nelson Street to help development sites. Both of those were early suggestions about four years ago. I think in more recent years it has been very difficult for me to get direct involvement in the process with DRD, despite being on the SAG I felt my views were frequently ignored. I was the only independent Architect or urban design component in that.

I am making that context to say that I am not some sort of odd-ball coming here with an alternative. I have offered this alternative dispassionately, free, so I ask that is respected and that I am treated cordially. This alternative is not offered as a fully worked up Scheme. Design is an iterative process and that is the spirit in which it is offered, which is in the public good.

Public good for three reasons: Cost, disruption, but more importantly the real motivation for me to get involved in road engineering, is because it is about urban design, pedestrian connectivity and the local communities. I have been working with the local communities pro bono for the last year helping them and assisting them.'

Response by The Department

Mr McGuinness: 'We recognize Mr Hackett's contribution in engaging with the Scheme and engaging with the side process. We recognise the fact that he is an Architect that he has been trying to get pro bono assistance from London. We take all that on board and don't criticise him for that. We say that there are a number of issues. They fall within two categories, one is engineering concerns and secondly there is a background policy concern.

To outline the engineering concerns - and I appreciate Mr Hackett has said this is an iterative process. Unfortunately, we can only look at what is there now and give our response to that. We think it is important to consider at this stage whether that is likely to result in a positive outcome. We are confident that is not the position, and we say there are six engineering concerns. We are not going to go through all the document but we want to highlight the two issues that we think are particularly significant in each of those. The first one is horizontal alignment. Also vertical alignment, cross-section, junction layout, drainage and flood, risk and southbound bus provision.'

Horizontal Alignment

Mr McBride introduced himself and responded as follows.

'I am John McBride. I am a Principal Engineer with AECOM, based here in Belfast. I am a chartered engineer with the Institution of Civil Engineers and I have over 10 years experience in the design and delivery of major road Schemes. My experiences includes the delivery of the M1 Westlink, DBO package one, DBO package two, and I have also been working on the York St Interchange since its inception.

Mr Inspector, when we look at horizontal alignment as highway engineers, we develop sketches of the alignment of an interchange. Once we start to apply the various engineering standards of the DMRB, we frequently find for good engineering reasons, that the various links or whatever cannot be provided. For example, once we allow for the horizontal alignment transitions to achieve smooth changes in direction; vertical alignments, such as vertical parabolic curves and also when we consider merge and diverge junction arrangements.

If we look at the alternative proposal in front of us, it is my professional opinion that we would have to make significant changes to the horizontal to accommodate other geometric parameters, for example, the inclusion of standard nose lengths and widths.

By way of an example if we look at the Westlink to Dock Street off-slip, from the evidence submitted by City Reparo, they indicated that the radius on that off-slip from the Westlink to Dock Street will be about 180 metres. However, it is my considered opinion that radius will have to further reduce to about 100 metres to allow for the standard diverge nose width of 3.3 metres measured over a length of 40 metres to give an overall ratio of 1 in 12. If we look at the City Reparo proposal the nose length would appear to be 12 metres with a nose width of 1.7 metres.

What does that actually mean for the driver? If you are coming along the Westlink and you want to come off to go to the M3. You diverge off quite sharply, according to the City Reparo proposal, into a single lane on a downhill section with a 100 metre radius to swing left past the Dargan Bridge piers, and at the same time then swing right to avoid the next Dargan Bridge pier before straightening up and then continue to Dock Street. All the while you will be faced with a lane breaking out on your near side and you are going straight into a junction off York Street. That is a lot for a driver to take in over a very short period of time.

I know the curves here show 180 metres but I suspect it will be about 100 metres once we allow for verges and barriers. I also note that some of the radii quoted in the City Reparo proposal are lower than those in our proposed Scheme. For example, the M2 to Westlink alignment is quoted at 127 metres. Our Scheme achieves 150 metres, a larger horizontal radii which is better for the driver trying to negotiate the turn.

Looking at the alignment of the Dock Street / M3 slip road, the City Reparo proposal made no allowance for cycle lanes to go into that arrangement. That proposal would need a wide verge to allow for cycling. This may require additional land from a third party which is not currently required for the proposed Scheme.'

In response to a question from the assistant Inspector, Mr McBride confirmed that the land is derelict at present but there are several planning applications lodged for that site for various uses that would be affected.'

Vertical Alignment

We have to be very mindful of headroom and clearances when considering vertical alignments. City Reparo in their proposal have demonstrated a headroom of 5.4 metres. By lifting up the Westlink to M2 slip road by 4.5 metres and dropping York Street by two metres they achieve six and a half metres, which they say it sufficient.

Having considered standard engineering depths for bridges and making the necessary allowances for super elevation on curved bends we think you will need substantially more than that. It is my opinion that you need at least a couple hundred millimetres more than that, which will require you to drop York Street or, alternatively, lift the Westlink to the M2/M3 links.

Cross-Sections

Looking at cross sections we note that a number of the links, even the M3 to Westlink link is shown as a single lane without a hard shoulder. The provision of single lanes without hard shoulders is likely to lead to operational difficulties on the Scheme. If there is a breakdown on a single lane with no hard shoulder how is anyone expected to negotiate past the breakdown? That will lead to congestion upstream.

The City Reparo proposal has notably advocated the use of narrow bridges and road links to minimise the footprint of the road Scheme. In horizontal design we use widened verges, particularly on curves, to provide the necessary stopping sight distance into junctions and entrances and generally along the road. We also need to widen these verges to accommodate road signs, lighting columns and safety barriers along with other services. The objective of making the verges wider is to ensure that these are suitably set back from the road so that they don't restrict visibility.

We note from the recent response from City Reparo, that they state that their links should not need "Dock" signs or other reasons to widen the verge. They are saying they don't need wide verges to accommodate road signs.' Mr Hackett interjected to point out that only refers to bridges Mr McBride acknowledged that point and added 'on the Westlink to York Dock Street off-slip we have a bridge and we don't have any wide verge here. If you are driving along in your car you need a road sign on the near side to tell you to diverge off for the M3. If we don't have the wide verges there we can't provide that.

The cross sections submitted by City Reparo show a 15.75m clearance between bridge piers at Dock Street. We have measured this on-site. A very detailed topographical survey was carried out and we would agree with that figure, we have actually measured slightly more at 15.877m. We need to protect the existing bridge piers and it is normal and customary in road engineering to provide a barrier in front of the piers. The barriers themselves have a working width and that allows for the

actual barrier itself and also the rotational deflection of the vehicle should it happen to impact against it. You generally allow 600mm.

There is a single lane travelling from Westlink to the M3. A single lane link requires six metres, to allow a vehicle to negotiate past another broken down vehicle. That is six metres in terms of a four metre lane and one metre wide hard strips on either side. As shown in the City Reparo proposal we have a barrier between the footway and carriageway. Again that is going to need similar working with 600ml. That adds up to 7.200m taken out of that already.

Looking at the far side we have an existing bridge pier that needs protection in a similar manner. The barrier itself needs 600ml working width. You also need a setback to that barrier to ensure, for reasons highlighted over the past couple of days, to avoid driver shyness and the like of 600m.

The City Reparo proposal maintains two lanes, i.e. two standard lane widths of 7.3 metres giving us 8.500m overall. Adding the 8.5 metres to 7.2 metres and take it away you from the total leaves just 177mm for the footpath. The standard provision is 2.000 metres. That is a show stopper in terms of the cross-section and alignment through the bridge.'

Junction Layout

Mr McBride referred TD22 of DMRB Volume 6 for the design of interchange junctions. 'Within interchange junctions the standards set out what the lengths should be for noses and width. Looking at the M3 to Westlink movement we have a single lane coming through with two lanes coming through from the M2, giving a three lane section over all. It will be necessary to maintain those three lanes through to Clifton Street. We need to widen North Queen St Bridge and that is what is shown in our proposed Scheme. That would also have to be done with the City Reparo proposals. So that would have a similar impact in terms of disruption and works to that bridge.

For various reasons we need to maintain an access from the docks to the Westlink. In the original City Reparo proposal the docks to Westlink link connection was omitted. It has subsequently been put back in with the note that it should match the layout of the proposed Scheme from the docks to Westlink. The proposed Scheme has a new merge arrangement starting at Duncrue Street. To apply that to the City Reparo Scheme means we would still have to widen the M2 embankment, we would still have to extend Whitla Street subway, and widen the existing Dock Street motorway bridge to provide the additional lane capacity.'

In response to a question from the Assistant Inspector seeking clarification about the impact of adding access to the port to the City Reparo proposal, Mr McBride commented that this would require a new revised junction arrangement at Duncrue Street and also a slip lane, probably a single lane with the hard shoulder running parallel to the M2. 'It would be important to keep those flows separate to make sure that we don't have this attempted weave for traffic coming on until traffic coming off the M2 has made that decision to come to the Westlink. To widen the M2 embankment you need to pile the embankment and construct retaining walls as necessary to maintain the northbound provision along Nelson Street. It would also be necessary to widen the York Street Bridge on its eastern side to accommodate that extra lane coming in.

Drainage and Flood Risk

City Reparo have said that they have no flood issues, no pumping station and no flood risk. York Street is shown in a depressed corridor, according to the City Reparo, approximately two metres below ground level. It is my experience that you need probably about another metre below that again to allow for the construction

depth of the base slab below the underpass. That is now three metres below ground level. We have consulted NI Water and we understand the existing drainage infrastructure in the area. The nearest storm water drain in the area of sufficient depth would be at Corporation Street. It is at a depth of four metres below ground level. You need to allow for a fall in the drainage pipe to get run-off from York Street across Corporation Street. Typical drainage falls means that it wouldn't be possible and you do need a pumping station at York Street.

Looking at flood risk itself, City Reparo said that they have no flood risk issues but we say if we were to look at the Planning Policy Statement PPS15, there is a requirement to consider flood risk in developments. The relevant authority here is the DARD Rivers Agency. On these strategic flood maps you can see the extent of the flood plain. York Street is at risk of coastal inundation from Belfast Lough for flood events of 1 in 200 years. The flood will easily extend as far as York Street and up Henry Street. TransportNI has recognised this flood risk and we have provided measures to protect our underpasses from such an event. What is unclear from the City Reparo proposal is how they intend to prevent flood inundation. They have a flood risk that needs to be considered.

Public Consultation

We undertook a public consultation exercise in June 2011. Representatives from the local community and elected representatives came to us to say they wanted to see southbound movement reintroduced on York Street. Having considered the traffic proposals for the Belfast area we have provided a southbound bus lane on York Street and a cycle lane that provides sustainable provision into the City Centre. It provides an important link between the Yorkgate train station and the new relocated University of Ulster campus. In City Reparo's proposal they didn't have any southbound provision on York Street. In the second revision it was put in. In the third one that we received, it is back out again. How does that sit in relation to policy, and the stated desires from elected representatives to see it reintroduced back into the city centre.

Policy

Ms Somerville provided a response in respect to policy matters. Regarding two aspects of policy, this is her preliminary view on planning matters.

'The absence of the bus lane would be of some concern in regard to the Belfast Plan and BMAP and the policies referenced earlier this morning in regard to the arterial routes and the community greenways, and there would be a possible conflict with the City Reparo proposal in regard to that bus lane.' In response to a question from the Inspector, Mr Hackett agreed that it would need a lot of work on the proposal to introduce a bus lane. Ms Somerville explained that she was referring to the current version, and it doesn't have a bus lane.

'There are two policy matters in regard to access to the Port. The first matter is the Regional Development Strategy, section 3.107. That policy is very clear about strengthening connection and access to the Port. The City Reparo proposal might have an impact, given the technical reasons that have already been referred to.

The second aspect is the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, and the section that deals specifically with the Harbour is Section 4, Volume 2. There is considerable text about the Harbour, and key is access into and out of the Harbour and the role that the Harbour and Port plays in the life of Northern Ireland as the main regional Port.

Ms Somerville also commented on Mr Hackett's point that his ideas were ignored in SAG. At each of those meetings there was fulsome discussion and a lot of his suggestions have been taken into account and recorded in the SAG report. The Department has given a commitment that those SAG recommendations would be

implemented. He has had a very important role and has had significant impact in shaping things in regard to the SAG.'

Air Quality

Mr McGuinness added a comment regarding the opinion from a Senior Council in London, Robert McCracken. Belfast City Council yesterday dealt with the three issues in the opinion, and they indicated that it was their view that the three points he deals with did not arise in this case. That is also our view. I had asked Dr Gray to address that and he had provided me a paper late yesterday in which he reiterates what Belfast City Council said, but he makes one further point. He indicates that he works in London on occasion and through his recent and current work in London, including air quality work for Transport for London, the opinion expressed by Mr McCracken has not resulted in any change to air quality related planning policy issued by the Secretary of State, the Mayor of London or any of the London Boroughs. In London, as in the rest of the UK, air quality can be of material consideration, but planning applications are considered in the round based upon a Scheme's benefits and disbenefits.'

Mr McBride questioned Mr Hackett about his blog where he commented in respect of the proposed Scheme "It was the most workable Scheme for achieving best practice, making use of the option of sunken links as opposed to overpasses. This creates an opportunity to contain the road network through landscaping and carefully designed buildings that create quiet courtyards" and asked why in your alternative proposal have you provided overbridges above York Street, given the potential perception of community severance for north Belfast from the City Centre?

Mr Hackett explained that at the time of the comments four options were being presented. 'Some options in the original Scheme included overpasses of at least 700 metres long and 60 feet in the air at their highest point. We opposed options B and D. We advocated this option but we always talked about supporting an option called C Plus, the plus is what we were trying to add. We were concerned about the overall impact of the B and D options because of the height of the overpasses. It is not comparable at all to the two overpasses that we are proposing now. We heard yesterday that Sustrans first had their issues rebuffed, then they engaged deeply. That is the sort of engagement we were looking for. In the early days the City Council had just acquired planning powers. There has been a marked shift in the evidence that City Council gave yesterday from their early involvement in the side group.

The final breaking point for us in this process it has been Little George's Street. It is incumbent, in my view, upon DRD or TransportNI to make an assessment of those houses that it is robust and holistic.

Mr Megarry replied that in response to being asked by some of the folks at Little George's Street to come to the site and give them information that would allow them to gauge the height of York Street we did what was asked. Just to confirm that the height of the footway on York Street is five metres not six metres that was quoted.'

Inspectors' Comments (Mark Hackett)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI written and verbal responses set out above have been noted.

Mr Hackett has had considerable involvement with the Scheme development and had the opportunity to submit his ideas on many occasions. The proposed Scheme reflects his contributions and several of his ideas are included in the project under consideration at the Inquiry.

The York Street Interchange is a complex junction with numerous discrete traffic movements and the development of the proposed grade separated Scheme has been undertaken within a particularly restricted site.

Although the proposal to take the Westlink to M3 traffic movement out of the grade separation would offer greater freedom for the design of the remaining links, it cannot be achieved while maintaining acceptable engineering standards. In addition pedestrians, cyclists and public transport are not adequately provided for in the alternative proposal.

Mr Hackett has made a number of changes to his proposal in response to identified deficiencies but we conclude that although further amendments may be possible, these would be insufficient to overcome the major deficiencies that remain with his proposal as submitted to the Inquiry.

We do not accept that Mr Hackett has demonstrated that a viable option exists. We believe that there is no merit in carrying out further assessment or design work and therefore make no recommendations on progressing his alternative proposal.

It was noted that Mr Hackett has taken a close interest in the possible impacts of the proposed Scheme on adjacent residential areas. His main contribution at the Inquiry in support of individual speakers can be found in IP66 (Mrs Brenda Murphy).

Our comments regarding the impact of the Scheme on the residents of Little George Street are included under Section 7.5 and our recommendations under Section 8.2.

4.2.24	Objection number	OBJ24
Objectors Name.....	Garth Boyd/Karen Smith, Trouw Nutrition	
Date submitted.....	10 March 2015	
NIMVO plot number.....	N/A	

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I AM WRITING TO YOU, ON BEHALF OF TROUW NUTRITION IRELAND, 36 SHIP STREET, BELFAST, IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESENTATION AND CONSULTATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

I HAVE SOME MINOR RESERVATIONS, IF THE PROJECT WAS TO PROCEED, WITH REGARDS TO THE PROPOSED FLOW OF TRAFFIC FROM THE DOCKS, VIA DOCK STREET ONTO THE M2, BUT MY MAIN CONCERN IS THE ALMOST CERTAIN DISRUPTION TO THE BUSINESS OF TROUW NUTRITION IRELAND WHILST THE WORKS ARE ONGOING.

THE PREMISES OF TROUW NUTRITION IRELAND IS ACCESSED VIA WHITLA STREET AND GARMOYLE STREET WHICH IS CURRENTLY ONE WAY TRAFFIC. WE HAVE ON AVERAGE IN EXCESS OF 50 ARTICULATED VEHICLE MOVEMENTS ON AND OFFSITE PER DAY, ENTERING VIA MARINE STREET, WHICH SITS BETWEEN OUR PREMISES AND THAT OF THE WHITLA STREET FIRE STATION. FROM MAPS, MODELS AND DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES WE LEARNT THAT PART OF THE 'CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS' WILL INVOLVE MAKING CORPORATION STREET, GARMOYLE STREET AND WHITLA STREET TWO WAY TRAFFIC FOR A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE

PROJECT. IF THIS IS THE CASE THEN OUR CONCERNS WOULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

- **ACCESS ONTO OUR PREMISES WILL BE AFFECTED NEGATIVELY, WITH A KNOCK-ON EFFECT LIKELY FOR OTHER TRAFFIC AS OUR VEHICLES AND THOSE OF OUR CUSTOMERS ATTEMPT TO ACCESS AND LEAVE THE SITE.**
- **CONSIDERATION MUST BE GIVEN TO THE FACT THAT THE TURNING CIRCLE REQUIRED FOR THE ARTICULATED VEHICLES WILL LIKELY AFFECT ONCOMING LANES AND HENCE THE GENERAL FLOW OF TRAFFIC IN THE AREA, ESPECIALLY AT PEAK TIMES**
- **SOME DELIVERY VEHICLES TO OUR SITE USE MARINE STREET AS A DELIVERY POINT VIA PNEUMATIC BLOW-IN PIPES, BUT AS THIS STREET IS USED ALSO VIA THE FIRE BRIGADE THEN WE ARE AWARE ON THE NEED TO KEEP ACCESS FREE TO BOTH ENDS OF THE STREET.**
- **ALTHOUGH TROUW TRADES ACROSS THE WHOLE ISLAND OF IRELAND, A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE TURNOVER IS ON A COLLECTED BASIS FROM OUR PREMISES, HENCE OUR CUSTOMERS NEED TO HAVE FREE AND EASY ACCESS TO OUR PREMISES BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 7AM – 6PM.**

IN DISCUSSIONS WITH DRDNI OFFICIALS, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THERE WAS PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT ONLY 6 PROPERTIES NEEDED VESTING ON AN INNER CITY PROJECT OF THIS SIZE, BUT IT IS OUR OPINION THAT DUE CONSIDERATION HAS NOT BEEN AFFORDED TO ALL BUSINESSES DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE WORKS.

Temporary Traffic Management

As part of the completed buildability assessment of the scheme, TransportNI identified potential temporary traffic management layouts that would create sufficient working areas for construction of the scheme.

These potential layouts were discussed with your representatives at the recent Orders Exhibition event and propose a two-way running layout on Garmoyle Street and Whitla Street. Such a layout would be required for a significant period of time whilst works are completed on Nelson Street to construct the new diverge from the M2 motorway.

TransportNI has carried out a swept path analysis of the proposed two-way layout on Garmoyle Street and is content that access for articulated lorries can be maintained in the proposed arrangement. This is illustrated on the attached drawing. It should be noted that only a single lane is proposed in contra-flow which vehicles entering/exiting your site would have to turn across.

Whilst TransportNI has identified a potential traffic management solution using this two-way proposal, it is important to note that the temporary traffic management layout would ultimately be a matter for the appointed contractor to develop. Restrictions on the number and timing of lane closures would be set out within the construction contract. For the avoidance of doubt, the contractor would be required to maintain access to your premises at all times during the works.

As intimated above, TransportNI has considered the impacts during construction on adjacent businesses and residents and would ensure that access to all properties is maintained for the duration of the works.

Mr Boyd, accompanied by Ms Smith, spoke at the Inquiry on the afternoon of Day 2. His initial input is set out below with minor editorial adjustments:

‘We replied to consultation back on 10th March.

Some background about our business.

We work in a mineral and vitamin pre-mixing business for the agriculture industry. Our business has been based in Belfast for 50 years, and we employ 37 people. We supply locally and we export over 50% of our product to the Republic of Ireland and further afield. The business is actually located at Ship Street, which is between Nelson Street in the north and Garmoyle Street in the south and Marine Street.

I think we noted in a letter that it is an excellent project, we know that it will be good for business on the island, but we have some concerns.

Our first main concern is that we have issues with the maps provided by DRD to ourselves. I think it was on folio N11093 showing land which we believe we own at the rear of our premises but marked as DRD land. When we challenged the officers they said the maps aren't precise, but on the e-mail and communications it talks about DRD land. So that is the first concern.

The second concern is around our ability to continue trading while the works are being completed, and in particular because it is highlighted that at certain points, a significant part of the work, that of Garmoyle Street and Whitla street would go to contraflow. A big part of our business is collected so we have up to 50 articulated vehicle movements on and off-site during the day. We will have to work those against the contraflow. We have deliveries into Marine Street where we share the function with the Whitla Street Fire Station, so as neighbours we are acutely aware that both sides of that street have to be kept clear at all points. They have their statutory obligations on response times. It is really around the total functioning of the business.

The third concern is just around some very sensitive weighing equipment that we run at different points in our operation, and with the potential piling works. Would we be able to work during the piling activities?

The fourth point is we have two direct competitors either side of the works on different parts of Belfast, so once again if we are affected by the works at certain points of the day, or heavily affected, then the likelihood is the customers will just go to an easier point of loading.

These are our main concerns with regard to the Interchange.'

Once the query on the ownership of the land had been understood, Mr Turley said that he thought the area shown in pink on the projected drawing encapsulated a folio of land that is registered to DRD and this registration had gone back to a previous scheme. This boundary had been recorded or registered in the Land Registry as being owned by DRD. He added that it was not unusual for boundary rectification to have to take place because of errors from the past and LPS were currently carrying out surveys and making digital updates. It was not the intention of the Department to vest any of the Trow Nutrition property or land and that was something TNI needed to correct, as all the pink area had been included in the vesting map. The idea was to incorporate all previous land into one folio at the end of scheme and there was no intention other than to include land that is registered to DRD, correctly or incorrectly.

Mr Turley added that the important point to note was that land that is registered to anybody does not necessarily confer title, as the title will still remain with the original owners. What was registered with the land Registry could be inaccurate and therefore require correction.

Furthermore, there were previous old streets in this area over which Trouw had established a right of way and that right of way would maintain regardless of whether the Department still owned them or not. Many properties, especially roads in and around the City were unregistered but TNI were responsible for them and the public had a right of way over them.

Mr Turley suggested that the simplest approach would be for Trouw to go back to their own deeds and documents and establish what they actually own and what they think is public property. They should then set in motion the necessary actions to make any necessary corrections.

Mr Turley again confirmed that there was no intention to take any of the land under discussion for the proposed Scheme.

Responding to the issue of deliveries to Marine Street, Mr Megarry said he believed that the concern which had been raised at the Orders Exhibition was in connection with the temporary traffic management phasing.

As a requirement of the Stage 3 Assessment process URS were required to consider how the scheme might be built. In doing so TNI had undertaken a buildability assessment which considered all the construction tasks and as a result they had developed a number of phases of temporary traffic management to enable certain works to take place. One of those phases, which had been discussed with Trouw, was the introduction of two-way running onto Garmoyle Street. The concern was that during that arrangement access to the premises, had to be maintained, and Mr Megarry confirmed that would be something that TNI would insist upon.

Despite the fact that TNI had developed and presented a phasing plan, there was no guarantee that the Contractor would adhere to exactly the same proposals.

Within the response letter TNI had attempted to identify how Trouw would be able to access and egress from the existing premises under two-way running. The auto-track images provided had hopefully demonstrated that from lane three on the existing Garmoyle Street, vehicles would still be able to access the premises. By running up lanes one and two vehicles would also be able to turn in to the premises, work around through the back of the buildings and come out. It would be a temporary measure lasting some nine months - if it happened at all.

Mr Boyd replied that the drawing showed technically that it could happen, but their concern, based on knowledge of the traffic flows around the area, were that at certain times of the day, moving 40 foot vehicles might not be easy. Mr Boyd added that they were very aware of the needs of their neighbours as well and especially the Fire Service.

The discussions they had with the team had been very good and constructive, but they wanted to know what would be happening to the weighbridge located to the west. If Trouw had access to the weighbridge side instead of using Marine Street, then they could work with the contraflow and change the route through their premises.

Mr Megarry replied that all traffic management arrangements would have to be vetted and there were potentially other options. He was undecided on the issue of using the weighbridge site. He did not know if permissions might be necessary, so he was not in a position to make a comment on that possibility.

In the process of agreeing temporary traffic management with the Contractor, access to existing premises would be a key factor. Anything that was proposed would have to receive the approval of the Department and TNI would seek to

ensure that Trouw had been consulted to ensure that appropriate access was provided.

Mr McGuinness said that in relation to Planning, he was not sure if Trouw were looking an additional access from the public highway, or if they were looking to intensify the use of an existing access to go through onto their land.

Mr Boyd replied that coming from the west with a contraflow in place, vehicles could come up Corporation Street and utilise the weighbridge area as a way of preventing bottlenecks. He added that the weighbridge was probably used for half a day a week, so there was a large underutilised space sitting beside their business with an existing access.

Mr Megarry said that TNI had no intention to prevent the weighbridge being accessed during the work. Access to it would have to be maintained along with other properties. There was no particular constraint that he was aware of that would permanently close the weighbridge site.

Mr Boyd pointed out that the DOE had a statutory function to do spot checks on vehicles coming out of the Harbour. However, the likelihood of vehicles coming past that point during the time of the works would be minimal, as most lorries go from the north side of the Port.

Mr Spiers said that the DOE weighbridge was the responsibility of another business unit operating entirely on its own account, and therefore TNI would treat that the same as any other business and provide continual access to it. Whether they continue to operate this particular weighbridge would be a matter for the DOE and their enforcement units.

The Assistant Inspector wanted to know if TNI had been in consultation with DOE regarding their weighbridge. Mr Spiers replied that TNI had not seen a need so far to make contact because they were not impacting on them, other than creating temporary traffic management arrangements. TNI would ensure that access was maintained and the weighbridge would be treated in the same way as any other business organisation.

Mr Spiers added that TNI would be quite happy to speak to the DOE in order to advise them of the upcoming works and the possible implications for their facility, but at this stage no such contact had been made.

The Inspector said that this contact would be useful. The more people were in the loop the better and this would help to avoid surprises emerging at the end of the day. Mr Boyd expressed agreement with this point of view.

Referring to the weighbridge and the vibration issue, Mr Coughlin pointed out that the Contractor would be required to take any of these sensitive type of issues on board as part of his design and also propose methods of working. Method statements would be required and the proposed approach would be revised if required. He added that it would be normal practice where vibration was a potential sensitive issue, to have monitoring in place during the works as well, This was an issue that would have to be factored into the Contractor's method of working.

The inspector concluded the discussion by saying that ongoing dialogue at every stage in this process would be essential, as this business was highly dependent on transport, with large vehicles coming in on a regular basis.

Inspectors' Comments (Garth Boyd/Karen Smith, Trouw Nutrition)

The concerns of the Objectors, the TNI responses set out above, together with the subsequent discussions at the Inquiry have been noted.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Garth Boyd/Karen Smith, Trouw Nutrition)

- TNI and the Contractor to have consultations with Trouw Nutrition in order to ensure that appropriate access to the premises is provided at all times throughout the construction phase of the Scheme.
- TNI to work with Trouw Nutrition in order to resolve the land ownership record issue.
- As vibration of their weighbridge is a potential sensitivity issue for Trouw Nutrition, a Method Statement to be produced by the Contractors as part of the detailed design process defining the proposed method of working. Vibration monitoring equipment to be provided during the construction phase and remedial action taken to address any adverse vibration issues caused by the Contractor if required.
- TNI to contact the DOE in order to advise them of the upcoming works and possible implications for their weighbridge facility.

4.2.25 Objection Number OBJ25

Objectors Name..... Residents of Little George's Street & Molyneaux Street

Date submitted..... 10 March 2015

NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

WE THE RESIDENTS OF LITTLE GEORGE'S STREET AND MOLYNEAUX STREET WISH TO EXPRESS OUR CONCERNS IN REGARDS TO THE FORTHCOMING YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS INTERCHANGE WILL AFFECT THE RESIDENTS OF BOTH THESE STREETS IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS.

BOTH STREETS

- **THE DISRUPTION CAUSE BY THE 3 YEARS CONSTRUCTION OF THE INTERCHANGE, IN THE WAY OF DUST, DIRT AND NOISE , ESPECIALLY NOISE IF MOST OF THE CONSTRUCTION IS CARRIED-OUT AT NIGHT,**
- **THE INCREASE IN NOISE AND AIR POLLUTION WHEN THE INTERCHANGE IS COMPLETED AND IS OPERATIONAL**
- **THE POTENTIAL FOR FLOODING IN THE UNDERPASSES.**

Construction disruption

TransportNI accepts that there would be an inevitable perceived disturbance to amenity during the construction phase of the Proposed Scheme, due to transient changes in dust, dirt and noise.

Construction-related impacts and overall buildability issues are given very careful consideration by TransportNI. Section 4.7 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement (ES) details the proposed construction sequence and construction programme. Construction-related impacts are also assessed and mitigation proposed in each of the technical chapters (Chapters 8 to 17) in Volume 1 of the ES. Moreover, in line with the guidance contained within Interim Advice Note 183/14, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has been prepared for the Proposed Scheme and is contained within Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the ES. The EMP forms

an outline plan and is closely aligned with the design and assessment process contained within Part II of the ES (Chapters 8 to 17). The EMP would be further refined and expanded by the appointed Contractor into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as more information becomes available and there is more certainty in terms of the proposed layout, construction methods, programme and the likely environmental effects.

An indication of likely working hours is outlined in Section 3.1 of the EMP (Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the ES). TransportNI does not envisage that the majority of construction operations would be carried out at night. Where night working is required, the Contractor shall not undertake operations likely to result in significant disturbance at nearby sensitive receptors (as illustrated on Figure 13.1 in Volume 3 of the ES) and residential properties, including, but not limited to, Little Georges Street, North Queen Street and Molyneaux Street. Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit has powers under the Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978 to impose requirements as to the times during which work may be carried out and the methods of work to be used.

Noise

A Noise & Vibration assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 13 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 13.7 of the ES, which includes the approximate length and height of proposed acoustic barriers along part of the Westlink. An indicative location for the proposed acoustic barrier along the Westlink, in the vicinity of Little Georges Street, is shown on Figure 13.3 and on Figure 11.7 (Sheets 2 & 3) in Volume 3 of the ES.

Thin Surface Course System (TSCS), otherwise known as low noise surfacing, would also be provided on interchange links between Westlink, M2 and M3, and the slip roads from these to the local road network. Whilst the noise benefits of this surfacing are mainly evident at higher speeds, there would be some benefits at the lower speeds on the Proposed Scheme. However, no correction for the low noise surfacing has been included in the calculations and, hence, the noise assessment reported in the ES is a worst-case assessment. With this mitigation in place, properties in Little Georges Street / Molyneaux Street area are predicted to experience decreases in noise levels with the Proposed Scheme in operation, as shown in Figures 13.3 and 13.4 of the ES.

Air pollution

An Air Quality assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 8 in Volume 1 of the ES. Changes in annual mean pollutant concentrations at a selection of representative receptors (which includes the Little Georges Street / North Queen Street / Molyneaux Street area) for the Opening Year (2021) and the Design Year (2035) between the Do-Minimum and Do-Something scenarios are shown in Tables 8.19 and 8.21 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 8.7 of the ES. During the operational phase of the Proposed Scheme, no predicted exceedances of the national objective limit values are expected, thus there would be no significant effects on air quality. Therefore, no specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

Underpass Flooding

A Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken for the Proposed Scheme, summarised in Chapter 16 in Volume 1, and included in Appendix 16, Annex C in Volume 2 of the ES. The Strategic Flood Map for Northern Ireland, published by DARD Rivers Agency, has been used to assess the potential flood risks to the Proposed Scheme from various sources, including flood risk from rivers and sea and

surface flooding. The risk from surface flooding is considered very minor and local in nature. However, as York Street and its environs are located within the defined coastal floodplain for Belfast Harbour, it is at risk of potential flooding if the existing flood defences were breached or overtopped. Appropriate flood protection measures have been incorporated into the design of the underpasses within the Proposed Scheme to protect them from inundation in the event of such coastal flood events occurring, as illustrated on Figure 16.8 in Volume 3 of the ES.

LITTLE GEORGE'S STREET

- **THE WIDENING OF THE WEST LINK, WHICH WILL BRING THE WEST LINK CLOSER TO THE BACKS OF THE HOUSES IN THE UPPER HALF OF LITTLE GEORGE'S STREET AND INCREASE THE NOISE AND AIR POLLUTION TO THESE HOUSES.**
- **THE HEIGHTENING OF THE RETAINING WALL AT THE BACK OF THE HOUSES AND THE ERECTION OF A SOUND BARRIER ON TOP OF THIS, WHICH WILL BLOCK OUT LIGHT TO THESE HOUSES AND SO DEPRIVE THE RESIDENTS OF THE RIGHT TO LIGHT.**

Works to Existing Retaining Wall

No works are planned to increase the height of the existing retaining walls along the back of the Little Georges Street properties. It is however proposed to steepen the existing embankment to accommodate an increase in carriageway width. The existing landscaping would be removed for construction purposes. TransportNI notes that Table 4.1 in Volume 1 of the published ES provides a full list of drawings which illustrate the Proposed Scheme and would specifically highlight drawing YSI-URS-XX-XX-DR-RE-EW201 that illustrates the proposed retaining solution. These drawings are contained within the separately published Volume 3 of Part 2 of the Proposed Scheme Report (the Engineering, Traffic and Economic Assessment Report).

Noise

As stated above, a Noise & Vibration assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 13 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 13.7 of the ES, which includes the approximate length and height of proposed acoustic barriers along part of the Westlink. An indicative location for the proposed acoustic barrier along the Westlink, in the vicinity of Little Georges Street, is shown on Figure 13.3 and on Figure 11.7 (Sheets 2 & 3) in Volume 3 of the ES.

Thin Surface Course System (TSCS), otherwise known as low noise surfacing, would also be provided on interchange links between Westlink, M2 and M3, and the slip roads from these to the local road network. Whilst the noise benefits of this surfacing are mainly evident at higher speeds, there would be some benefits at the lower speeds on the Proposed Scheme. However, no correction for the low noise surfacing has been included in the calculations and, hence, the noise assessment reported in the ES is a worst-case assessment. With this mitigation in place, properties in Little Georges Street area are predicted to experience decreases in noise levels with the Proposed Scheme in operation, as shown in Figures 13.3 and 13.4 of the ES.

Air pollution

As stated above, an Air Quality assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 8 in Volume 1 of the ES. Changes in annual mean pollutant concentrations at a selection of representative receptors (which includes the Little Georges Street area) for the Opening Year (2021) and the Design Year (2035)

between the Do-Minimum and Do-Something scenarios are shown in Tables 8.19 and 8.21 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 8.7 of the ES. During the operational phase of the Proposed Scheme, no predicted exceedances of the national objective limit values are expected, thus there would be no significant effects on air quality. Therefore, no specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

Erection of Sound Barrier

A 1.5m high close boarded fence (or similar acoustic attenuation barrier) is proposed as a mitigation measure to reduce the noise impact of the Proposed Scheme on adjacent residential properties, with its extent shown in Figure 13.3 in Volume 3 of the ES.

Right to Light

TransportNI has completed a Daylight assessment of the Proposed Scheme to determine the impacts, if any, on the adjacent residential properties at North Queen Street, Little Georges Street and Molyneaux Street. The assessment has shown that all living rooms, which are the only occupied rooms of the existing buildings affected by the Proposed Scheme, would still enjoy adequate daylight after the Proposed Scheme is in place.

MOLYNEAUX STREET

- **THE REMOVAL OF THE OFFICIAL PEACE WALL AT THE BOTTOM OF HENRY ST, WHICH WILL LEAD TO THE LOSS OF PROTECTION TO THE RESIDENTS AND THEIR PROPERTIES IN MOLYNEAUX ST.**
- **THE YORK STREET BRIDGE WILL ENABLE PEDESTRIANS TO LOOK DOWN ON THE HOUSE IN MOLYNEAUX ST, AND SO TAKE AWAY THE RESIDENTS RIGHT TO PRIVACY IN THEIR OWN HOMES.**

THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE MAIN CONCERNS THAT THE RESIDENT WOULD HAVE AND WOULD APPRECIATE IF THESE CONCERNS COULD BE ADDRESSED.

Removal of Peace Wall

The existing boundary wall at Henry Street would be demolished to make way for a new, higher retaining wall.

TransportNI and their consultants have engaged with residents, the Department of Justice and the Police Service of Northern Ireland with regard to the existing interface. Discussions included the provision of direct connection between Henry Street and the York Street footway (via steps) and the edge treatment to the elevated footway itself. It is accepted that appropriate consultation should be undertaken for this aspect of the detailed design in due course.

Loss of privacy

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment along the edge of the scheme is included in these drawings.

TransportNI considers that the fencing/boundary treatment, hedging and planting commitments contained in the ES would reduce any perceived loss of privacy at Molyneaux Street when the scheme opens to traffic and through time, the openness of the site would be reduced as the landscape planting matures. It is accepted that

appropriate consultation would be undertaken for this aspect of the detailed design in due course.

Mrs Caughey spoke at the Inquiry in the afternoon of Day 1. Her presentation is recorded in this Report with minor editorial adjustments as follows:

My name is Bernie Caughey and I live in Molyneaux Street which is situated at the bottom of Henry Street and faces onto York Street. I am representing certain residents of Molyneaux Street who have concerns with regard to the York Street Bridge.

The first of those concerns is if we want to walk into town we have to double back on ourselves to the Cityside entrance and start to walk up along the new bridge which, I believe, is going to be at the height of five metres high. So it will be five metres height up and five metres height down into town. We think this is unsuitable for the elderly and the disabled. I know there was talk of putting steps at the bottom of Henry Street. Again these would not be suitable for elderly people or the disabled. So we don't think that would work.

The second of our concerns, is that the bridge will start to go up from York Street entrance. As it starts to rise it will create a corridor for about 60 metres from the wall of the bridge and the wall of Cityside. We believe that this will lead to an anti-social behaviour hot spot. It is in an area that over the past few years there have been several muggings, and that is in broad daylight. This corridor will be blinded from the residents and we believe it will be a gathering spot for anti-socials. We spoke to the community safety police who are in agreement with us, they would have concerns with regard to this as well.

The final point is, as has already been stated, the bottom of the Henry Street is an interface area. There are several marches that go along each year, most of those are peaceful and the reason they are peaceful is because of the peace barrier at the bottom which goes from round Henry Street and all round York Street to the beginning of the Westlink, that separates the residents from the marchers. When the new road is built that will take away that barrier and it will then be that the marchers will be up above looking down and residents looking up, which we believe is a potential for more trouble.

I have heard about the marchers coming along North Queen Street. Being realistic, without being political, we all know the problems around rerouting parades without getting into that one. I couldn't see that happening. These may seem like insignificant concerns to most people but to the people living there they are very significant.

We feel that this whole scheme has been designed to suit road users, people who are going to use this section of roadway for five or ten minutes twice a day. These residents have to live here 24/7 and we feel that we have not been taken into consideration.'

Responding, Mr Megarry said that the issue of the interface was something that TNI had become aware of since the objections were received. As previously mentioned, TNI had engaged with the DOJ and the local police staff, and also attended a meeting with Kate Clark and Kieran Shannon, who he believed represented the local community.

He went on to say that he agreed that upon turning the corner past Cityside you would be entering into a rather narrow space. He added that the retaining wall that would curtail people would be further away than the existing kerb line,

so the space would be wider. The retaining wall would be about 1.5 metres high as it passed the corner of Cityside, (height amended later to 2.7 metres) and descend towards the Cityside entrance to zero metres; it would be like a wedge.

Discussions had taken place as to whether it would be preferable to have a solid treatment along the top of that wall or not.

Mrs Caughey had made the point there was concern that people would have to double back on themselves to walk towards York Street. The possibility of constructing steps in this area had been discussed but Cathy Lachen, the PSNI Sergeant, had expressed the view that steps in themselves would become an area where people would congregate, so they would not be appropriate. In addition, the elderly would not enjoy having to use such steps.

Mr Megarry pointed out that the diversion would be around 30 metres, making a total additional distance of approximately 60 metres.

Mr Hackett asked for confirmation that the road over the bridge would be at grade again just about the entrance to Cityside, and Mr Megarry said it would be of that order. Having looked at the drawings Mr Hackett suggested that the diversion would be 120 to 130 metres and Mr Megarry confirmed later that the measurement would in fact be 125 metres.

Referring to the concern that the parade would be elevated, he made two points. Firstly, the police view was it was better to have a parapet edge which was open, which offered no protection, not a structure that people could duck down behind.

Mrs Caughey replied that the local PSNI members that they had talked to were not in favour of this suggestion.

Mr Megarry added that the discussion had been with Brian Gaskey and Cathy Lachen who were members of the local PSNI staff. At that meeting TNI had given an undertaking that they would consult the local community with regard to the detailed design, including whether the area should be provided with an enhanced lighting to ensure greater levels of safety. The discussions could be extended to include the design of the parapet; whether it would be open so that people would be unable to hide, or closed to create a visual deterrent.

Mr Megarry went on to suggest that appropriate planting could be used to create a visual screen and without wishing to diminish the parades issue he pointed out that it was of relatively short duration, impacting a limited number of days per year. A solution with regard to the interface area could be reached with appropriate levels of consultation between the residents and TNI.

Mrs Caughey replied that she agreed with the comment on parades but the anti-social behaviour in the corridor could be something that would be there several days a week.

Mr Megarry understood that the concern was the ability of people to congregate in this area. A possible solution could be suitable low level planting that would not allow people to hide.

Commenting on the possibility of planting low level vegetation, Mr Callan said that with anti-social behaviour nowadays, they did it in front of people irrespective of whether trees were there or not. He quoted the example of a fifteen year old boy heading for a train, who came to his house chased by two or three young people. Anti-social behaviour was very much 'in your face'.

Inspectors' Comments (Residents of Little Georges Street & Molyneaux Street)

See Section 7.5 - Inspectors' Considerations – Impact of the Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Residents of Little Georges Street & Molyneaux Street)

See Section 8.2 - Inspectors' Recommendations – Impact of the Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas.

4.2.26 Objection number..... OBJ26
 Objectors Name..... Roy White
 Date submitted..... 10 March 2015
 NIMVO plot numberN/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE PROJECT.

I ATTENDED THE INFORMATION DAY AND VIEWED THE MODEL AND THE PANELS, AND SPOKE TO THE REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT.

THIS WAS USEFUL, THOUGH I WOULD HAVE LIKED MORE COMPUTER SIMULATIONS OF HOW THE SURROUNDING STREETS WOULD LOOK AND FEEL, AFTER COMPLETION, TO PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS.

I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON THE NEED FOR SUCH A MASSIVE ROAD PROJECT, OR ON HOW IT WILL IMPROVE THINGS FOR DRIVERS. HOWEVER, I'M AFRAID THAT I DON'T THINK ENOUGH CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO PEDESTRIANS OR CYCLISTS, OR TO HOW THIS PROJECT FITS IN WITH THE CITY, BEING AS IT IS ON THE EDGE OF THE CITY CENTRE.

THERE IS A GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT ACHIEVING POPULATION GROWTH IN CITIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE CENTRE, CAN HELP BOTH THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT. THIS SCHEME, AS IT IS, WILL MAKE THIS MUCH HARDER. PEOPLE WILL NOT WANT TO LIVE OR SPEND TIME WHERE HIGH SPEED ROADS ARE SO PROMINENT – MUCH MORE MUST BE DONE TO MAKE THEM LESS OBTRUSIVE.

EVEN IF WE LARGELY RETAIN THE PROPOSED LAYOUT, MORE CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR CYCLING. I ACCEPT THAT THERE ARE SOME SLIGHT IMPROVEMENTS OVER THE CURRENT SITUATION, BUT IF WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT A “CYCLING REVOLUTION” WE SHOULD BE AIMING FOR MUCH MORE. THIS INCLUDES PUTTING IN PHYSICALLY SEPARATED CYCLE LANES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE YORK STREET OVERBRIDGE.

Pedestrian Provision:

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great George's Street. It is considered that these changes and additional improvements to each of the remaining signalised junctions, would benefit non-motorised road users through improved amenity on these routes.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the city centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

Cycling Provision:

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Roy White)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Roy White)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.27	Objection number	OBJ27
	Objectors Name.....	Andrew Thompson
	Date submitted.....	10 March 2015
	NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I WISH TO VOICE MY CONCERNS OVER THE OF THE PLANS FOR THE NEW YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

IN MY OPINION THE DESIGN, AS IT STANDS, NOT ONLY DISCOURAGES CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS BUT ACTUALLY INCREASES THE DANGER TO BOTH THESE GROUPS. THE CYCLING LANES PROPOSED, WHICH GO AGAINST ALL INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE, SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DESIGNED BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN ON A BIKE IN TRAFFIC. IT WOULD BE BETTER TO REMOVE ALL OF THE GREEN MARKINGS AS THESE OFFER AN ILLUSION OF SAFETY. IN ADDITION, EXPECTING BUSES AND CYCLES TO SHARE THE SAME LANE IS UTTER STUPIDITY.

Discourages Pedestrians/Cyclists

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great George's Street. It is considered that these changes, and additional improvements to

each of the remaining signalised junctions, would benefit non-motorised road users through improved amenity on these routes.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

For cyclists, it is noted that no dedicated cycling facilities currently exist on York Street. The Proposed Scheme improves access to the City Centre for cyclists by providing mandatory cycle lanes in each direction.

WITH THE OPENING OF THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS THERE WILL BE MANY MORE PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS MAKING THE JOURNEY BETWEEN THE YORK STREET TRAIN STATION AND THE CAMPUS. THIS MEANS THAT THERE WILL BE LARGE GROUPS OF PEOPLE CROSSING SEVERAL JUNCTIONS AT RUSH HOUR. THIS WILL SLOW DOWN TRAFFIC AND WILL ACTUALLY INCREASE THE DELAYS, WILL BE DANGEROUS, AND WILL CREATE CONFLICT BETWEEN PEDESTRIANS AND DRIVERS.

Opening of University

The proposals presented for consultation are considered to address the potential future demand for pedestrians and cyclists along York Street, following the relocation of the Ulster University campus.

This is evident in the provision of cycle lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions and the provision of continuous pedestrian links, including controlled crossings, along the proposed footways on each side of York Street. The proposed southbound bus lane also provides an opportunity to improve direct bus links to the new campus from North Belfast and the strategic road network.

THE DESIGN SEEMS TO HAVE ONE FOCUS, AND THAT IS HOW TO FACILITATE MORE AND MORE CARS. THIS SEEMS MISGUIDED AS INCREASING CAPACITY AT THE YSI DOESN'T TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ANY OF THE BOTTLE NECKS ELSEWHERE IN BELFAST. FOR EXAMPLE, WHERE THERE IS A DELAY ON THE M1, THE SOUTH BOUND TRAFFIC BLOCK THE ROUTES OF NORTH BOUND TRAFFIC VIA THE WEST LINK, THE BROADWAY INTERCHANGE, AND ACROSS TOWN. A BIGGER YSI WILL NOT FIX THIS. THE ONLY THING THAT WILL FIX IT IS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CARS. YOU REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CARS BY PROVIDING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR OTHER FORMS OF TRAVEL.

More Traffic

The purpose of the Proposed Scheme is to remove the existing bottleneck created by the signalised gyratory system at York Street, thereby improving journey time reliability for private road users, freight operators and public transport. As you have noted, the scheme focuses on this bottleneck and therefore is not intended to solve the wider issues of traffic congestion in Belfast.

THE YSI NEEDS A SEGREGATED CYCLE LANE RUNNING IN BOTH DIRECTIONS – WITH BUS STOP BY-PASSES AND INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE EMPLOYED WHERE TURNING VEHICLES CROSS OVER THE CYCLE LANES.

THERE SHOULD BE WIDER PAVEMENTS TO FACILITATE THE INCREASE IN FOOTFALL WHEN THE UU CAMPUS OPENS AND RATHER THEN HAVING TO NEGOTIATE SEVERAL JUNCTIONS PEDESTRIANS SHOULD HAVE A CLEAR WAY BETWEEN THE TRAIN STATION AND THE CAMPUS.

HOW TO DO ALL THIS? REMOVE A CAR LANE. SIMPLE.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Andrew Thompson)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Andrew Thompson)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.28	Objection number	OBJ28
	Objectors Name.....	Oonagh McSorley
	Date submitted.....	10 March 2015
	NIMVO plot number.....	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO THE PROPOSED LAYOUT OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE. THE CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CURRENT PLANS IS VERY POOR AND A MISSED OPPORTUNITY. MY FAMILY LIVES IN NORTH BELFAST, WITHIN TWO MILES OF CITY HALL. IT WOULD SUIT US ALL TO BE ABLE TO GET INTO THE CITY CENTRE AND HOME AGAIN BY BIKE. THIS NEW SCHEME DOES NOTHING TO IMPROVE MY SAFETY, NOR THAT OF MY CHILDREN.

I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE MINISTER DANNY KENNEDY HAD INSTIGATED A POLICY OF INCLUDING CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE IN PROJECTS. THIS PAINT ON THE ROAD IS NOT SUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, NARROW LANES SEPARATED BY PAINT FROM HEAVY TRAFFIC IS NOT SUFFICIENT – FOR ME, NOR MY CHILDREN. I’VE READ THE NI GREENWAYS BLOG AND THERE SEEMS TO BE A CLEAR SOLUTION TO PROVIDING SUFFICIENT SPACE, WITHOUT THE EXPENSE OF HAVING TO PHYSICALLY WIDEN THE BRIDGE. THE CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS TO BE UP TO A CERTAIN MINIMUM STANDARD BEFORE IT WILL CONVINC ME AND OTHERS LIKE ME, THAT IT IS SAFE FOR ME AND MY FAMILY TO USE IT. IF IT IS NOT SAFE ENOUGH, IT IS A WASTE OF PAINT.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (Oonagh McSorley)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Oonagh Mc Sorley)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.29 Objection number..... OBJ29
Objectors Name..... John Murphy
Date submitted..... 10 March 2015
NIMVO plot numberN/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I HAVE LOOKED AT YOUR CURRENT PLANS FOR THE NEW YORK STREET INTERCHANGE. I DO NOT DRIVE. I DO WALK, CYCLE AND USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT. I HAVE BEEN CYCLING ALMOST DAILY FOR OVER 60 YEARS.

THE PLANS MAKE VERY POOR ACCOMMODATION FOR CYCLING. I USE THE ROAD IN IT'S CURRENT FORM WHILE ON MY BIKE. IT IS AN EXPERIENCE THAT CAN GET THE HEART RACING – NOT IN A GOOD WAY. MY GRANDCHILDREN ARE AT AN AGE WHERE THEY ARE ABLE TO RIDE THEIR BIKES WITH CONFIDENCE. I WOULD LOVE TO BE ABLE TO CYCLE WITH THEM, BUT THE ROADS ARE TOO DANGEROUS. THE NEW PLANS DON'T CHANGE THIS, DESPITE THE POSITIVE NOISES MR KENNEDY HAS MADE ABOUT CYCLING.

AS A USER OF BUSES, I HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE OF “FLOATING” BUS STOPS IN OTHER CITIES. I’VE NEVER FOUND THEM TO BE A PROBLEM. THERE’S AN OPPORTUNITY TO USE THIS DESIGN ON BUS-STOPS ALONG YORK STREET, ALLOWING BETTER FLOW AND SEGREGATION FOR TRAVELLING BY BICYCLE.

THE PROPOSED CYCLE LANES AND BUS LANES ARE NOT GOING TO IMPROVE THINGS FOR CYCLISTS. THOSE BRAVE ENOUGH TO USE THE ROADS CURRENTLY, WILL NOT BENEFIT. I CANNOT SEE THE MONEY SPENT ON PAINT TO BE OF ANY VALUE.

I WOULD HOPE AND EXPECT BETTER PROVISION FROM A £165M PROJECT TO ENCOURAGE USE OF SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT THEREBY REDUCING MOTORISED TRAFFIC AND SO IMPROVING TOTAL TRAFFIC FLOW.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (John Murphy)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (John Murphy)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.30	Objection number.....	OBJ30
	Objectors Name.....	John Ferguson
	Date submitted.....	10 March 2015
	NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

THE PROPOSED REDESIGN FOR THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE IS A WELCOME ONE FOR MOTORISTS WHO MUST USE THE BELFAST-CENTRIC ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE TO GET TO A DESTINATION ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CITY, E.G. FROM THE NORTH TO BOUCHER ROAD OR BEYOND OR VICE VERSA, THE SO-CALLED STRATEGIC TRAFFIC.

HOWEVER, I WORRY ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PEOPLE WHO MUST LIVE AND WORK NEARBY THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE. THE PLAN'S STATED OBJECTIVE IS TO MAINTAIN ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS, BUT THE EXISTING PROVISION FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS IS LIMITED AND SOMETIMES SCARY, WHICH GIVES LITTLE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. FOR SEVERAL YEARS WHEN I LIVED NEAR BALLYMENA, I USED THE NORTH SIDE PARK AND RIDE AT YORK STREET, AND WALKED TO THE CITY CENTRE WHERE I WORKED BECAUSE IT WAS MORE CONVENIENT FOR ME THAN USING THE BUS, WHICH DIDN'T GO ON A SUITABLE ROUTE AND I COULD NOT BE BOTHERED WAITING FOR IT. THE 15-MINUTE WALK TO THE WATERFRONT WAS GOOD FOR ME, TOO. HOWEVER, GETTING ON TO NELSON STREET FROM GREAT GEORGES STREET AS A PEDESTRIAN WAS OFTEN VERY DANGEROUS, WITH MANY MOTORISTS GOING THROUGH RED LIGHTS TO TRY TO GET ONTO THE WESTLINK. I USE THAT EXAMPLE, BECAUSE ALTHOUGH THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS WILL REMOVE A LOT OF 'STRATEGIC' TRAFFIC, THERE WILL STILL BE MANY MOTORISTS COMMUTING OR DELIVERING USING THE NEW INTERCHANGE, MOTORISTS UNDER TIME PRESSURE OR JUST IMPATIENT, WHO WILL MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS FOR

PEDESTRIANS. I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE OF THE ANSWER. THERE ARE SUBWAYS UNDER VICTORIA STREET, BUT YOU'D ONLY USE THEM TO LOOK AT THE GRAFFITI. ELEVATED CROSSINGS HAVE A TERRIBLE SIDE EFFECT OF NEEDING TO BE CLOSED IN AND HAVE VAST RAMPS. THE STREET-LEVEL PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ARE CHEAP AND PEDESTRIANS GENERALLY PREFER THE VISIBILITY THEY AFFORD, BUT THEY WILL NEED TO BE FENCED IN.

Access for Pedestrians/Cyclists

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great George's Street. It is considered that these changes would benefit non-motorised road users as they would experience a less intimidating environment.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

AND I HAVEN'T EVEN MENTIONED CYCLISTS YET! I ONCE RODE THROUGH BALLYMENA ON MY BIKE. I AM AN AVID RURAL ROAD CYCLIST WHO IS GENERALLY CONFIDENT TO SKIRT ROUND TOWNS OR NIP THROUGH A VILLAGE, BUT BALLYMENA CENTRE, EVEN IN SLOW TRAFFIC WAS A SCARY EXPERIENCE AND I RESOLVED NOT TO RIDE THERE AGAIN.

I FELT VERY VULNERABLE SURROUNDED BY CARS THAT COULD OPEN THEIR DOORS OR PULL OUT AND FLATTEN ME AT ANY MOMENT. PART OF THAT COULD BE IMPROVED BY ME SIMPLY BEING MORE AWARE OF THE DANGERS AND RIDING MORE CONFIDENTLY, BUT I USE THAT AS AN EXAMPLE TO HIGHLIGHT HOW CYCLISTS WILL FEEL AT THE NEW YORK STREET INTERCHANGE, WHICH WILL TEND TO INVOLVE DENSE TRAFFIC MOVING AT HIGHER SPEED THAN BALLYMENA TOWN CENTRE. THE PROPOSALS INCLUDE NARROW CYCLE LANES WITH NO PROTECTION FROM VEHICLES AND A SHARED BUS/CYCLE LANE. THAT WOULD BE OK, BUT THERE WILL BE TRAFFIC CROSSING THE CYCLE LANES AT SOME OF THE JUNCTIONS. THERE ARE SIMILAR CYCLE LANES ON RACEVIEW ROAD BETWEEN BALLYMENA AND BROUGHSHANE. I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN A CYCLIST ON THOSE ROADS (GRANTED I'M NEVER THERE WHEN MICHELIN WORKERS CHANGE SHIFT), BUT I FOR ONE WOULD BE TERRIFIED AT THE THOUGHT OF A LORRY OR EVEN A CAR CROSSING IN FRONT OF ME TO LEAVE FOR, OR JOIN FROM, THE M2. IF THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE IS CONSTRUCTED AS CURRENTLY PLANNED I FORESEE THE CYCLE LANES BEING AS EMPTY AS THE ONES BETWEEN BALLYMENA AND BROUGHSHANE AND PEOPLE DECRYING THEM AS 'USELESS PAINT'.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THERE WILL VERY SOON BE A HUGE INFLUX OF PEOPLE TO THE NORTH OF BELFAST BECAUSE OF THE NEW UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER BUILDINGS THAT ARE NOW BEING ERECTED. MANY OF THESE NEW RESIDENTS WILL BE YOUNG, FIT AND ABLE STUDENTS WHO MAY NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES FOR A CAR, BUT WILL BE MAKING MANY JOURNEYS ON FOOT OR BY BICYCLE AND I CAN FORESEE MANY CYCLISTS SIMPLY DISREGARDING THE INADEQUATE AND UNSAFE CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND USING THE FOOTPATH INSTEAD, TO THE DETRIMENT OF PEDESTRIANS (AND FURTHER RE-INFORCING THE PEOPLE'S VIEW THAT CYCLING ON THE FOOTPATH IS NOT SOMETHING THE POLICE BOTHER WITH, IN FACT I'VE SEEN THEM DO IT THEMSELVES!). AND THAT'S A BEST CASE SCENARIO. I AM OFTEN OUT AND ABOUT ROUND RAVENHILL ROAD, ORMEAU ROAD AND THE LAGAN EMBANKMENTS WHERE THE CYCLE LANES ARE SOMETIMES EMBARRASSING AND SOMETIMES SIMPLY IGNORED BY THE FEW CYCLISTS I SEE, EVEN WHERE IT DOES MAKE SENSE TO CYCLE IN THEM, PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY JUST DON'T TRUST THE CYCLE LANES. AND WHO WOULD, IF, LIKE ON THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE, A BUS, LORRY OR A CAR THAT "SIMPLY DIDN'T SEE THE CYCLIST" COULD KNOCK YOU OFF AT ANY MOMENT AS THEY EXIT FOR A SIDE ROAD.

IN CONCLUSION, I BELIEVE IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO MAKE THE NEW YORK STREET INTERCHANGE AS SAFE AND APPEALING AS POSSIBLE FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS BECAUSE ENCOURAGING LOCAL JOURNEYS TO BE MADE BY FOOT OR BY BIKE WILL REMOVE CARS FROM THE ROAD AND FURTHER IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL TRAFFIC, NOT JUST STRATEGIC TRAFFIC. IT WILL ALSO HUGELY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE MANY RESIDENTS AND FUTURE STUDENTS IN THE AREA. THE PROVISION FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS MUST BE IMPROVED, NOT SIMPLY MAINTAINED AT THE CURRENT INADEQUATE LEVELS.

Cycling Provision

As mentioned previously, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Inspectors' Comments (John Ferguson)

The concerns of the Objector and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (John Ferguson)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.31	Objection number	OBJ31
	Objectors Name	Arthur Acheson
	Date submitted	10 March 2015
	NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

INTRODUCTION

THE SCHEME AS PROPOSED AND DESCRIBED IS DISAPPOINTING. IT IS ESSENTIALLY SINGLE FUNCTION INFRASTRUCTURE.

HM TREASURY GREEN BOOK

WHEN EXAMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH HM TREASURY GREEN BOOK, THE PROPOSAL FAILS TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF DEALING WITH THE MOVEMENTS OF PEOPLE RATHER THAN VEHICLES.

THE GREEN BOOK IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD AND USED AS A SET OF FORMULAE TO PROVE THAT ONE PARTICULAR (OFTEN CAPITAL BUILD) OPTION IS BETTER THAN A “DO-NOTHING” OPTION OR ANY OF THE OTHER OPTIONS THAT MAY BE UNDER CONSIDERATION.

HOWEVER, THE GREEN BOOK IS A MUCH MORE FUNDAMENTAL DOCUMENT. IT CALLS ON PROMOTERS OF SCHEMES TO “BUILD IN FLEXIBILITY FROM THE START”. IT REQUIRES CONSIDERATION OF “RADICAL OPTIONS”. IT REQUIRES EARLY (AND GOOD) CONSULTATION. ITS BINDING GUIDANCE INCLUDES THE USE OF “PILOT PROJECTS”, “ACTIVITIES RATHER THAN PROJECTS”, “RECURRENT AS WELL AS CAPITAL EXPENDITURE” AND CONSIDERATION OF VARIOUS DIFFERENT TIMESCALES.

EXAMPLES OF PILOT PROJECTS, RADICAL OPTIONS AND BUILDING IN FLEXIBILITY

CREATIVE CONSULTATION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF PEOPLE MOVING IN NORTHERN IRELAND WOULD INCLUDE ACTION LEARNING. PART OF THIS HAPPENS NATURALLY, SIMPLY BY OBSERVATION. I AM AN ACTIVE USER OF THE INTERCHANGE. I HAVE USED IT FREQUENTLY AS A CAR DRIVER AND AS A PEDESTRIAN. THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE IS VERY QUIET BETWEEN THE HOURS OF MIDNIGHT AND 6.00AM. IT IS ALSO VERY QUIET ON A TYPICAL SUNDAY. DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS THE INTERCHANGE IS CONSIDERABLY LESS BUSY THAN WHEN SCHOOLS ARE IN SESSION.

THE ACTIVE LEARNING FROM THESE OBSERVATIONS IS THAT THE VOLUME OF TRAFFIC PEAKS AT CERTAIN TIMES OF DAY, LARGELY CAUSED BY BEHAVIOUR OF PEOPLE WHO FIND THAT THEIR OPTIMUM MEANS OF TRAVEL IS BY PRIVATE CAR THROUGH THE INTERCHANGE. THE OPTIMUM MEANS OF TRAVEL IS DICTATED BY A COMBINATION OF CONVENIENCE, COMFORT AND COST. PILOT PROJECTS CAN TEMPORARILY ADJUST THE OPTIMUM. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS ALREADY APPARENT THAT DURING HOLIDAY PERIODS, EVENINGS, NIGHTS AND WEEKENDS THE INTERCHANGE IS FULLY SUFFICIENT IN ITS PRESENT STATE AND COULD BE IMPROVED BY THE CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS, PARKS AND OTHER AMENITIES ON THE LAND AROUND THE STREETS, CREATING A BETTER CITY DISTRICT FOR ALL USERS.

ADDITIONAL PILOT PROJECTS WHICH COST VERY LITTLE COULD INCLUDE, FOR EXAMPLE, MEASUREMENT OF THE BUSIEST TIMES ON THE INTERCHANGE (PERHAPS IT IS A DECEMBER AFTERNOON BEFORE CHRISTMAS) AND THE TAILORING OF TECHNIQUES TO ENCOURAGE GREATER USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT DURING THE BUSIEST TIMES. FUNDING BUS AND TRAIN JOURNEYS FREE FOR ALL AT THIS TIME FOR A TRIAL PERIOD (SAY A BUSY MONTH) WOULD INDICATE THE DIFFERENCE THAT GREATER USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT MAKES TO THE

INTERCHANGE. THE DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECOGNISES THE BENEFIT OF PILOT PROJECTS, HAVING USED THEM TO HELP TO ALLEVIATE PARKING ISSUES IN BELFAST CITY CENTRE DURING THE PRE-CHRISTMAS PERIOD. ONE YEAR, THE PARKING CHARGES IN SELECTED PARTS OF THE CITY CENTRE WERE REMOVED FROM 4.30PM INSTEAD OF FROM 6.00PM DAILY. A SECOND PILOT PROJECT A YEAR LATER CHANGED THIS TO ALLOW FREE PARKING AND BUS TRANSFERS FROM PARK AND RIDE LOCATIONS. MEASURING THE IMPACT OF SUCH CHANGES ON THE INTERCHANGE WOULD BE BENEFICIAL AND IF THEY ARE FOUND TO BE OF BENEFIT, THEIR COST COULD BE ASSESSED AGAINST SOME OR ALL OF THE CAPITAL WORKS PROPOSED. INCREASING THE FREQUENCY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT WOULD ALSO BE A WORTHWHILE PILOT PROJECT FOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND GOVERNMENT AND BELFAST CITY COUNCIL WHICH MUST ACT IN UNISON FOR THE CITY.

CO-FINANCE BY THE EUROPEAN UNION WILL RECOGNISE THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE SCHEME WHICH ARE DEFINED BY THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME WHICH ARE STATED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AS ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY, ECONOMY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INTEGRATION.

Alternatives/Pilot Projects

The completed Stage 1 Scheme Assessment process, reported in the Preliminary Options Report, considered the merits of alternative schemes similar to the concept of pilot projects which you have described. Our assessment considered the merits of investment in other public transport alternatives, such as the provision of additional bus provision and Park & Ride facilities.

It was considered that alternative public transport options which require connection through the junction would therefore still be subject to the same conflict with the strategic traffic movements. Therefore, the existing delays for road users on both these routes would remain. It was therefore considered that this conflict could only be addressed through the provision of grade separation, as included in the Proposed Scheme.

The five Government objectives for transport of Environment, Safety, Economy, Accessibility and Integration are the defined high level objectives for the Proposed Scheme. At each stage in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Scheme Assessment process, the Proposed Scheme has been assessed against these objectives and the findings published in the associated Assessment Summary Tables.

As illustrated in these Assessment Summary Tables, the benefits presented by the Proposed Scheme are consistent with the Government's objectives for transport and therefore considered compatible with the guidance of the Green Book.

ENVIRONMENT

THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT DESCRIBES THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AS A "DEGRADED URBAN LANDSCAPE" WHOSE "MAIN CHARACTERISTIC IS THE LEGACY OF 20TH CENTURY TRANSPORT PLANNING WHICH HAS CHANGED THE URBAN FABRIC". THE EXISTING JUNCTION DEGRADED THE URBAN LANDSCAPE AND THE PROPOSALS CONTINUE THE DEGRADATION. THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT REFERS TO THE EXISTING SCHEME AS HAVING CAUSED "A CERTAIN DEGREE OF SEVERANCE" BUT THE PROMOTERS KNOW THAT URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS REFERS TO THIS JUNCTION AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE NEIGHBOURHOODS AS A "SHATTER ZONE", WHICH IS HARDLY A COMPLIMENTARY DESCRIPTION AND

CERTAINLY EMPHASISES THE AMOUNT OF DISCONNECTION WHICH HAS BEEN CAUSED BY MAJOR ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE CREATED IN THE LAST CENTURY. NOT ONLY DISCONNECTION, BUT ALSO PROXIMITY TO RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS OF HEAVY INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH IS AT TIMES AS HIGH AS THE EAVES OF THE ADJOINING BUILDINGS, CREATES A SECOND CLASS ENVIRONMENT THAT SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED IN A 21ST CENTURY CITY. STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF THE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE RATHER THAN USING ITS EXISTENCE AS A MEASURE THAT THE PROPOSALS WILL BE NOT MUCH WORSE THAN THE CURRENTLY DEGRADED URBAN ENVIRONMENT, OR IN ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT PARLANCE "SLIGHT ADVERSE". RESIDENTS HAVE PROVED RECENTLY THAT THEY ARE NOT CONTENT WITH "SLIGHT ADVERSE"; THEY SUCCESSFULLY JUDICIALLY REVIEWED AND STOPPED A STADIUM PROJECT IN THE WEST OF THE CITY.

Environment

As stated in sub-section 5.1.5 (Local context) in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement, it is accepted that the existing study area is a “*degraded urban landscape*”. As also stated in this section, “*the area is dominated by large-scale physical infrastructure features, such as the Lagan and Dargan bridges which have caused a certain degree of severance*”.

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES.

Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report, including the Environmental Statement, TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies, including the Forum for Alternative Belfast. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation through the improvement of its finishes and open spaces.

As stated in Section 11.9 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement, the development offers the opportunity to re-design the spaces between the road infrastructure and at the site periphery, to create a more positive interface and contribution to the Belfast cityscape. The impact on the cityscape around the periphery of the site would be limited, due to the relatively enclosed nature of the site setting. Therefore, on a Belfast City scale, the development would be generally blended into the site with appropriate mitigation.

SAFETY

NO FIGURES ARE PRODUCED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT TO DESCRIBE THE EXISTING SAFETY SITUATION AND THAT WHICH IS PROPOSED. CERTAINLY ACCIDENTS OCCUR AT THE INTERCHANGE AND IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO SEE WHICH AREAS OF THE EXISTING ROAD AND STREET NETWORK ARE ACTUALLY THE MOST DANGEROUS IN TERMS OF SAFETY OF PEOPLE.

Safety

Road safety is not an area considered by the Environmental Statement, in accordance with the requirements of the DMRB. Instead, the Road Safety Audit process established by Standard HD 19 of the DMRB, has been followed in the development of the Proposed Scheme. This has required the completion of a Stage

1 Road Safety Audit by an independent audit team, led by a qualified and experienced Road Safety Auditor. This audit included a review of all reported road traffic collision data within the vicinity of the scheme to identify associated trends. From the available data, it appeared that a significant number of road traffic collisions were located in the vicinity of the existing signalised junctions on the gyratory system (rear-end shunt type collisions). We would note that the Proposed Scheme would remove these junctions in their current form.

ECONOMY

THE SCOPE TO PRODUCE A "LIGHTER, QUICKER, CHEAPER" SOLUTION TO THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE IS NOT DESCRIBED. THE DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS SEVERAL TOOLS IN ITS TOOLKIT IN ADDITION TO THE CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMMES OF TRANSPORT NI. FOR EXAMPLE, ITS ACTIVE TRAVEL UNIT RECOGNISED THE IMPORTANCE OF "PLACES" - DESTINATIONS THAT ARE WORTH TRAVELLING TO - IN CONTRAST TO "DEGRADED URBAN ENVIRONMENTS", "LINKS", "EMBANKMENTS", "GYRATORY JUNCTIONS", "UNDERPASSES", "BRIDGES", "CORRIDORS", "HUBS", "GATEWAYS". THE ECONOMY DEPENDS ON GOOD PLACES THAT PEOPLE ENJOY AND I HAVE NEVER HEARD ANY PERSON EXPRESSING JOY OR DELIGHT ABOUT ANY OF THESE TECHNICAL NAMES GIVEN TO PLACES, SAVE PERHAPS A BEAUTIFUL BRIDGE.

Economy

The Traffic and Economic assessment of the Proposed Scheme is presented in the published Engineering, Traffic and Economic Assessment Report.

A detailed Traffic and Economic assessment has been undertaken using industry standard techniques and computer models to quantify the effects of the Proposed Scheme. Detailed costs have been prepared and included in the assessment to determine the economic value of the scheme. A range of sensitivity tests has also been undertaken to examine the extent to which results from the computer models vary under different scenarios.

The results of the economic assessments indicate that the Proposed Scheme represents good value for money, with an overall Net Present Value of £99.780m and a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334.

The results of the various sensitivity tests indicate that the Proposed Scheme would generate a positive Net Present Value over a range of test scenarios where the overall benefits exceed the cost of the scheme. It is concluded that the Proposed Scheme would improve operating conditions in the York Street area and represents good value for money.

ACCESSIBILITY

THE PROPOSALS REDUCE ACCESSIBILITY TO EXISTING HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL PLACES. THEY ALSO REDUCE THE SCOPE TO WALK OR CYCLE DIRECTLY FROM PLACE TO PLACE, OFFERING DULL, UNINSPIRING AND ACTUALLY DANGEROUS WALKING PLACES WHICH BY THEIR DULLNESS ARE UNPOPULAR AND BY THEIR UNPOPULARITY ARE EMPTY, CREATING HUGE TEMPTATION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, MAKING THEM UNSAFE TO USE AND COMPLETING THE VICIOUS SPIRAL DOWNWARDS FROM IDEAL PLACES TO DANGEROUS AND INJURIOUS ONES OF WHICH NOBODY CAN BE PROUD.

Accessibility

The completed environmental impact assessment has concluded that the Proposed Scheme would, through the removal of significant volumes of strategic traffic from

local streets, improve the amenity for pedestrians on York Street and improve accessibility from North Belfast to the City Centre. The proposed implementation of additional cycling and public transport infrastructure on York Street is also considered to enhance accessibility from North Belfast to the City Centre for these modes of transport.

A Pedestrians, Cyclists and Community Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 14 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. This included an assessment of predicted impacts on Pedestrians (sub-section 14.6.1.12) and Cyclists (sub-section 14.6.1.13). Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 14.7 of the ES.

As stated previously, a Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES.

Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report, including the Environmental Statement, TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies, including the Forum for Alternative Belfast. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation through the improvement of its finishes and open spaces.

INTEGRATION

THE SCHEME IS DIS-INTEGRATIONAL. IT DOES NOT INTEGRATE WITH THE BUS STOPS, THE STATIONS, THE NORMAL STREETS, THE FOOTPATHS. IT DEGRADES ALL OTHER EXPERIENCES TO CREATE SMOOTH RUNNING IN EACH STRAND OF "SPAGHETTI "IN THE JUNCTION.

EVEN WITH THE SMOOTHEST SPAGHETTI, JUST ONE BREAK CAN CAUSE CHAOS. BELFAST IS NOT UNLIKE OTHER CITIES IN SOME RESPECTS - ACCIDENTS HAPPEN AND PLANNED AND UNPLANNED ROAD REPAIRS HAPPEN TOO. HOWEVER, IT IS UNLIKE OTHER CITIES IN THAT ROADS ARE BLOCKED FROM TIME TO TIME FOR OTHER REASONS, RELATED TO PROTESTS AND VIOLENCE AS WELL AS THREATS OF VIOLENCE.

Integration

The completed Environmental Impact Assessment has concluded that the Proposed Scheme integrates with land use planning and other government policies, specifically, the Regional Development Strategy, the Regional Transportation Strategy and the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. The improvements for public transport and non-motorised users on York Street have also been assessed as beneficial to transport interchange.

A Pedestrians, Cyclists and Community Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 14 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. This included an assessment of predicted impacts on the Public Rail Network (sub-section 14.6.1.7) and Public Bus Network (sub-section 14.6.1.8). Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 14.7 of the ES.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

INTERESTINGLY, I HAVE NEVER HAD A COMPLAINT ABOUT HAVING TO USE THE TRAFFIC SIGNALLED JUNCTIONS REFERRED TO IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT, NOR HAVE I HEARD COMPLAINTS FROM OTHER ROAD USERS, EXCEPT WHEN AN EMERGENCY OCCURS, WHICH BLOCKS ONE OR MORE LANES DUE TO ROADWORKS OR A ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT. WHEN AN EMERGENCY OCCURS IN A CITY STREET IT BLOCKS PERHAPS ONE OR TWO ROAD JUNCTIONS BUT THE PERMEABILITY OF STREETS IN THE CITY CENTRE AND SUBURBS ALLOWS TRAFFIC TO ESCAPE FROM THE EMERGENCY AND FIND OTHER ROUTES WITH RELATIVE EASE. THE NATURE OF THE STRATEGIC, SINGLE FUNCTION, ONE DIRECTIONAL LANES INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED INTERCHANGE IS THAT THERE IS NO ESCAPE. TO COMPENSATE FOR THE LACK OF ESCAPE, ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL FIXES ARE USED, INVOLVING LARGE GANTRIES WITH ELECTRONIC SIGNAGE WITH (OFTEN OUTDATED) MESSAGES SEVERAL MILES BEFORE THE JUNCTION, WARNING OF LONG DELAYS OR ADJUSTED SPEED LIMITS. TECHNOLOGY CANNOT FIX THE SITUATION AND SERIOUS CONGESTION OCCURS. THE PROPOSALS WILL ADD TECHNOLOGY WHICH AGAIN CANNOT FIX THE LACK OF ESCAPE ROUTES AND WILL INEVITABLY ALLOW CONGESTION DURING THE DIFFICULT PERIODS DURING AN EMERGENCY.

IT IS RECOGNISED THAT TECHNICAL FIXES SOLVE ONLY A SYMPTOM AND NOT THE CAUSE OF A PROBLEM.

Emergency Situations

TransportNI undertook a public consultation on the Proposed Scheme in June 2011. As part of this consultation, a questionnaire was used to invite the public's views on the problems with the existing junction and their preference on the way to resolve these problems. Of the responses received, 78% agreed with the need to improve connections between the Westlink, M2 and M3. Furthermore, the public considered that the key objectives for the Proposed Scheme, in descending order of importance, should be to reduce traffic congestion, improve journey time reliability, and improve road safety.

Although space is restricted within the site due to the constraints formed by existing built infrastructure, the various road links within the interchange have been designed to the current standards of the DMRB, with hard shoulders provided, in addition to Intelligent Transport Systems, to assist in the incident management responses. The Proposed Scheme has been developed in consultation with the emergency services, in particular the Police Service of Northern Ireland, who would attend any reported incident and direct traffic as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION - A WIDER GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

I RECOMMEND THAT DUE COGNISANCE IS GIVEN TO HM TREASURY GREEN BOOK BY A WIDER, MORE STRATEGIC GOVERNMENT COMMISSION THAN CAN EXIST IN SINGLE SECTION (TRANSPORT NI) OF A SINGLE DEPARTMENT (REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT). I RECOMMEND THAT THE COMMISSION BE REQUESTED TO EXAMINE THE SCHEME UNDER THE BINDING GUIDANCE OF THE GREEN BOOK AND THAT THE COMMISSION BE CHARGED WITH EXAMINING THE PROPOSALS UNDER THEIR KEY OBJECTIVES, ENVIRONMENT, SAFETY, ECONOMY, ACCESSIBILITY AND INTEGRATION, IN A MORE INDEPENDENT MANNER THAN PAID CONSULTANTS FROM A SINGLE DEPARTMENT AND TAKING COGNISANCE OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING GREEN BOOK HEADINGS:

- **BUILDING IN FLEXIBILITY FROM THE START - THE SCHEME CURRENTLY ALLOWS NO FLEXIBILITY FOR FUTURE TRANSPORT SYSTEMS AND**

EVEN REQUIRES CONSTRUCTION OF FOUNDATIONS FOR A FUTURE RAILWAY TO BE PREDICTED AND BUILT INTO ITS HEART, RATHER THAN HAVING FLEXIBILITY TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURES.

- **RADICAL OPTIONS - THE PROPOSED SCHEME IS NOT RADICAL - IT IS TRADITIONAL LATE 20TH CENTURY BASED ROAD PLANNING, SINGLE FUNCTION, WITH PREDOMINANCE OF USE BY PRIVATE VEHICLES AND NO ENDEAVOUR TO REDUCE THE DEMAND FOR TRAVEL BY PRIVATE CARS.**
- **EARLY CONSULTATION - THE PROPOSALS HAVE GIVEN ONLY HALF THE RECOMMENDED TWELVE WEEK CONSULTATION PERIOD WHICH WOULD ALLOW ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS OF PEOPLE TO PROPERLY ACQUAINT THEMSELVES WITH THE SCHEME AND PREPARE CONSOLIDATED RESPONSES. INSTEAD THE CONSULTATION HAS DEPENDED ON THE LEGISLATION WHICH REQUIRES A STATUTORY MINIMUM OF 6 WEEKS WHICH WAS ALLOWED. IN MY OPINION THIS IS INADEQUATE.**
- **PILOT PROJECTS - THE CURRENT SCHEME PRESENTS NO EVIDENCE OF PILOT PROJECTS WHICH WOULD REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS, MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE AND REDUCE THE NEED FOR CAPITAL WORKS ON INFRASTRUCTURE. PILOT PROJECTS COULD OPEN AN ATTRACTIVE PROSPECT OF KEEPING THE EXISTING TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS, REDUCING THE NUMBER OF VEHICLES BY CLEVER ENCOURAGEMENT AND SPENDING THE £165 MILLION NOT ON TUNNELS AND BRIDGES AND TARMAC BUT ON URBAN REGENERATION. SOME PREVIOUS BRIDGES AND OVERPASSES ARE NOW BEING CONSIDERED FOR REMOVAL - AT MORE COST TO THE TAX PAYER.**
- **ACTIVITIES RATHER THAN PROJECTS - MEANS TO ALLEVIATE PEAK PERIODS NEED TO BE CONSIDERED, INCLUDING ATTRACTIVE INCENTIVES FOR PEOPLE TO WORK FROM HOME AT CERTAIN TIMES, HAVING MORE FLEXIBLE TIMES TO COMMUTE, ETC. GOVERNMENT AS A MAJOR EMPLOYER IS IN A KEY POSITION TO ENCOURAGE MORE ACTIVITIES OF THIS NATURE WHICH WOULD REDUCE THE NEED FOR LARGE CAPITAL PROJECTS OF THIS NATURE.**
- **RECURRENT AS WELL AS CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO MAKING PUBLIC TRANSPORT MORE ACCESSIBLE, WITH PARTICULAR INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE PUBLIC TRANSPORT USAGE DURING PEAK PERIODS AT THIS INTERCHANGE AND OTHER SIMILAR AREAS OF CURRENT CONGESTION.**
- **CONSIDERATION OF VARIOUS DIFFERENT TIMESCALES - STEWARDSHIP OF THE PLACE NOW WOULD INDICATE THAT AT BEST ANY CONSTRUCTION WORK WILL COMMENCE THREE YEARS FROM NOW. CREATIVE USE OF PLACES MEANWHILE IS ESSENTIAL TO REBUILD COMMUNITIES AND THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE.**

Under the provisions of The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 (as amended), TransportNI remains the relevant statutory body for the development of strategic road improvement schemes in Northern Ireland, in consultation as appropriate with the other government departments.

The statutory public consultation process has been conducted in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. Any members of the public who wish to comment upon the Proposed Scheme outside this period are free to make representation to TransportNI at any time. The announced Public Inquiry for the

Proposed Scheme will provide a further opportunity for members of the public to make representation in this respect.

Mr Acheson spoke at the Inquiry during the afternoon of Day 1 and his initial contribution is reproduced below in full.

'I am a citizen of Belfast and of this region of Europe and that is the voluntary capacity in which I am here today, sir.

I am a first class architecture graduate of Queens University and I hold a Masters Degree from McGill University in Canada, a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and an academician of the Academy of Urbanism. I was the founder Chair of Belfast Civic Trust in 1982 and I currently Chair the Northern Ireland Government's Ministerial Advisory Group.

As Chair of a neighbourhood partnership in north Belfast, I chair the North Belfast Economic Forum, but I am here today, sir, as a citizen of Belfast and this region of Europe, not as a multi-disciplinarian or inter-disciplinarian, but as a post disciplinarian.

I want to set a bit of context. This is really a 50 year old scheme that we are talking about and it began in the 1960s. In the 1960s, the dream was of individuals driving everywhere in bright red cars and going to their destination smoothly along motorways. The dream has changed. The current regional strategy and regional transportational strategy is very different from reading the documentation that was associated with the genesis of the scheme, the Belfast Urban Motorway in the 1960s.

In the 1960s the scheme took a very patronising approach to citizens in favour of a limited number of people who had access to a car. Climate change was not recognised in 1967. The Ford Anglia and the Jaguar Mark II were Kings and Queens of the road. It was before computer aided design, before the internet when people used paper files, carbon copies, and few had access to a photocopier. My company got a photocopier in 1969. Everybody had to be physically there to work together. The programme for Government in the current era has changed all of this. Today the significance of promoting equality, tackling poverty and social exclusion are absolutely prime areas of Government concern, not moving people around in red cars.

The current Regional Transportation Strategy states:

"Reducing emissions and realising more sustainable transport arrangements will require significant changes in travel behaviour and difficult decisions as to how we prioritise and maximise the use of finite road space."

It also states:

"Heavier road traffic can cause poor air quality, unacceptable noise levels, a weakened sense of neighbourhood and local community and the loss of valuable living space as land is used for transport infrastructure. The impact is greater for those living alongside the main roads in urban areas which are predominantly in lower income areas." That is from our current Regional Transportation Strategy, which this purports to comply with.

Building new roads will not reduce the total volume of traffic, and whilst increasing road capacity can temporarily reduce congestion it ultimately leads to increased traffic as more people choose to travel or make new trips to take advantage of the new road space and improved connectivity. The capacity of the existing road, however, can be increased dramatically by moving people in a different way."

This is not me, this is the Regional Transportational Strategy telling us this. For

example, a public transport vehicle with 50 passengers does not require much more road space than a car with one occupant. As people choose to switch in significant enough numbers congestion can be managed. Public transport and active travel options should be safer, convenient, and reliable alternatives to the car making them the first choice for people, not the last resort."

I would like to move on to the question of public participation and consultation in the scheme, and certainly this Strategic Advisory Group which has been running, I think for the last nine and a half months, according to its report, from 15th January until 30th October 2015, that is nine and a half months during the 50 year development of this project.

It hardly seems to be strategic, and yet there have been strategic organisations thinking about this in Belfast for decades, and I don't need to name them. We are all aware of them, including some within Government and outside Government. Those have been excluded, as far as I can see, from the so called Strategic Advisory Group, and I would not agree that it is strategic. I would have to say it is too little too late. It talks, for example, about creating vibrancy in the left over spaces.

In the 1970s there was a programme in the Architecture Review known as: Slope space left over after planning. Well, here we are going to have slow space left after motorways, or slower space left over after roads. Roads are spaces which are absolutely vital in the city centre, yet all I can see this Strategic Advisory Group has been able to come up with is that they would be suitably secure by fencing and the planting of wild flowers.

So I do feel there is a huge opportunity missed, that we are just not addressing this as part of the urban fabric of the city. It is a single function piece of infrastructure, and when the Regional Transportation Strategy again tells us it is not about moving vehicles but about making sure that people and businesses can access the places and services they need in a sustainable way. That same strategy calls for making the most of what we already have.

It is clear to me as I listen every morning that the main areas of blockage in this city are not in the permeable routes which we are all familiar with, but in the impermeable routes that schemes like this tend to promote. You can't get off, there is nowhere to go, and every morning we hear about an accident, an incident, a security alert on one of our bits of urban motorway. One of those brings half the city to a halt. Two of those bring the city into virtual gridlock, people simply sitting on these things. And I do understand that there are many more ways to create permeability than create these long snakes of winding roads that run continuously through city centers.

I was interested to hear this morning that the T10 is actually a destination point. Belfast is a destination rather than Belfast being part of a through route to Larne or Coleraine or other places.

So I do think it requires to be dealt with and I would think that the European Union will be looking at it in terms of a destination point and not some kind of a city bypass.

Many towns and cities both in the United Kingdom and in other parts of Europe are dismantling infrastructures such as this which was built in the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s. Indeed, parts of Belfast are now looking to dismantle overbridges and things that were built, thinking they were going to solve a problem. For example, on Queens Quay where there is effectively a concrete infrastructure, it is so costly to take away the Government cannot even focus on taking it away and opening that place back for people.

So we do have to ask questions. When other people are abandoning schemes like this and removing them from their city and finding ways to deal with traffic flow, why Belfast 50 years later from the inception of the scheme still wants to proceed with it

against the good advice of many people who would say 30 acres of the city centers is more valuable for other purposes, for the multitude of other purposes, the multi-functional aspect of the city rather than the single function of moving mainly private vehicles.

I have been looking back at it, but when we look to the future I have done some sums, mostly based on figures from the Automobile Association, and if we continue with our road expenditure in the way it is predicted over the next 20 years, the budget will be around five billion. That will be on road improvements, Chairman.

If we were to build all the possible railway schemes that were put forward in the Railway Paper from DRD, including electrifying the line to Dublin, going out into the west of the Province to Dungannon, Omagh, Strabane and linking into Donegal plus the upgrading of the northern route, the total cost over the next 20 years would be about 5.5 billion at current rates. The fare figure for all public transport is 2.4 million; we have 5 for roads, 5.5 if we did all the railways, 2.4 for all fares on all public transport, buses and trains across Northern Ireland, and if we continue the way we are going during the same period driving our vehicles about on this infrastructure, we will spend £83 billion over the next 20 years.

So we are looking at choices here and those choices are about people's behaviour, the influence on people's behavior, and I would be sad if the engineering professions could only come up with one solution to all these multifarious issues and not determined to build more roads. It is against the Regional Transportation Strategy and it is not what is called for in the programme for Government.

That is all I have to say at the moment.'

Responding for TNI, Mr Spiers said that the Scheme was entirely consistent with the RDS, which prioritises the movement of people and goods. Most policy documents follow through from pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and freight transport, with the private car at the bottom of the hierarchy. This had been clearly demonstrated in all the strategy documents over the years.

He went on to say that the RDS also identified addressing bottlenecks on the strategic road network and the proposals before the Inquiry were to address the bottleneck on the Westlink, M2 and M3 intersection.

Mr Acheson replied that all the DRD documents referred to congestion at peak periods and the Scheme was designed to deal with perhaps 20 to 30 hours out of a total of 168 hours every week.

TNI was also predicting that traffic would continue to grow and this was based on mere extrapolation. People had to be together during the industrial revolution but this was no longer the case as the Internet had reduced the necessity to congregate. Habits were changing and human behaviour should be taken into account, rather than simply building more roads to temporarily alleviate congestion.

Mr Acheson was of the opinion we must stop the 83% of people who commute in their cars (normally one person per car) and this would not be achieved by facilitating smoother journeys.

Mr McGuinness wanted to know if Mr Acheson had any evidence to support his suggestion that traffic levels would decrease.

Mr Acheson replied that DRD had published evidence to that effect. More people used public transport when it was free, so this was a growth area. Usage had remained more or less static for those who have to pay, but there had been a substantial increase in usage by the over 60s and 65s. If 2.4 billion were to be spent over 20 years in providing free transport for everyone, then this would lead to a

much more significant change in behaviour, rather than the one or two percentage points which had been achieved to date.

Mr Spiers said that he fully supported the aim to make a modal switch to public transport and this was being actively promoted by the Department. However, the proposal under consideration was to address a traffic bottleneck on the existing network. 100,000 vehicles used the connection between the three roads and the objective was to reduce congestion at this point.

Mr Acheson suggested that a 10% or 15% modal shift would mean that the traffic conditions on the York Street Interchange would resemble a school holiday every day.

Mr McGuinness said that Mr Acheson was basing his evidence on a study which suggested that more people would use public transport if it was free. He added that this was a completely separate issue and asked if Mr Acheson had any evidence that forecast that future traffic levels in Belfast would reduce.

Mr Acheson replied that his evidence was in his proposed change to a greater use of public transport. He suggested that fifty people moving in only one vehicle would dramatically change the extent of the congestion in an urban interchange.

Mr Acheson went on to say that he was not aware that DRD had carried out any pilot studies to identify a better form of road junction, where a proper set of hierarchy were put in place, where people have priority and where traffic could flow reasonably continuously at around 20mph. He suggested that we were still using old technology which did not respect people as human beings, whose behaviour can be modified by an appropriate environment. He suggested that this was preferable to regulating and controlling people behind fences and gates, boxes and traffic signalised junctions, where they had to stand and wait, even in the middle of the night when there was no traffic around.

Moving on to a side issue, Mr Spiers said that the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) was drawn from a number of key stakeholders identified as being appropriate to inform TNI in relation to the Scheme.

The Group comprised:-

- Mr Spiers and Mr Colin Pentland - TNI
- Mr Mark O'Donnell - Department of Social Development
- Ms Ann Doherty and Mr Dermot O'Kane - Belfast City Council
- Mr Paul Spray - University of Ulster
- Ms Roisin McDonagh - Arts Council
- Mr Mark Hackett - The Forum for an Alternative Belfast
- Technical Support - URS

Mr Spiers said that this was a very good spread of people having a particular interest in the area, together with the key Stakeholders. TNI wanted to ensure that the YSI plans would not prevent others from implementing their own proposals.

He added that TNI had ensured that any residual land would be available for development. Access to that land would be provided and the intention was that it would be fully utilised.

Returning to the use of public transport, Mr Spiers confirmed that this was considered at the Preliminary Options stage. TNI had concluded that no public transport option was available to resolve the particular problem associated with the YSI.

However, public transport from North Belfast would be facilitated with the provision of a priority bus lane over York Street into Central Belfast. This would also link the

rail network to the City centre and the new University. Non-motorised users would be provided with new cycle lanes and additional pedestrian facilities.

The aims of the RTS and the BMP would be facilitated by separating strategic traffic from local traffic issues.

In conclusion Mr Acheson said that the purpose of the Scheme was to remove congestion at peak times from the York Street Interchange area. He was of the opinion that there were other ways to achieve the same result.

Inspectors' Comments (Arthur Acheson)

The concerns of the Objector, the alternative solutions proposed and the TNI responses set out above have been noted.

Whilst a modal shift to much greater use of public transport is an interesting concept, it falls outside the scope of the York Street Interchange Inquiry. This being the case, it would be more appropriate for Mr Acheson to make representations to the Minister for Regional Development.

4.2.32	Objection number.....	OBJ32
Objectors Name.....	Steven Patterson, Sustrans	
Change of Name	Gordon Clarke	
Date submitted.....	10 March 2015	
NIMVO plot number	N/A	

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

WE WISH TO OBJECT TO THE DRAFT ORDERS FOR THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE. WE OBJECT ON THE FOLLOWING BASIS:

- **THE PROPOSED SCHEME FAILS TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF WALKING AND CYCLING, AS SET OUT IN THE BELFAST METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT PLAN 2015.**
- **THE PROPOSED SCHEME FAILS TO MEET THE ASPIRATIONS/OBJECTIVES FOR CYCLING, AS SET OUT IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT'S DRAFT BICYCLE STRATEGY 2014.**
- **THE PROPOSED SCHEME FAILS TO GIVE DUE RECOGNITION TO THE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON WALKING AND CYCLING THAT THE CURRENT RELOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER WILL HAVE.**
- **WE ARE EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE PROPOSALS. WE PREVIOUSLY ENGAGED IN THE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS WHEN WE RESPONDED TO THE CONSULTATION WITH THE DESIGNERS LAST YEAR (SEE APPENDIX 1, LETTER DATED 28/3/2014 SENT TO URS). THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT OUR COMMENTS AND THE ADVICE GIVEN THEN HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED INTO THE PROPOSED SCHEME.**

THE BELFAST METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT PLAN 2015

THE JUSTIFICATION FOR AND DESIGN OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME REFERS TO A NUMBER OF STRATEGIES AND PLANS, INCLUDING THE BELFAST METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT PLAN 2015 (BMTP).

WE WOULD CONTEND THAT THE PROPOSALS FAIL TO TAKE ON BOARD THE OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN STANDARDS FOR WALKING AND CYCLING SET OUT IN THIS DOCUMENT.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME FAILS TO RECOGNISE AND PROVIDE FOR THE CYCLING NETWORK ILLUSTRATED IN FIGURE 8.4, BELFAST CITY CENTRE CYCLE PATHS (APPENDIX IL).

Fails to meet requirements of BMTP (Belfast City Centre Cycle Paths)

As shown in Figure 8.4 of the BMTP, York Street is identified as part of the proposed cycle route network. TransportNI considers that the Proposed Scheme is consistent with the principles of BMTP in this regard, as it proposes mandatory cycle lanes in both northbound and southbound directions along York Street between its junctions with Frederick Street and Dock Street.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME FAILS TO RECOGNISE AND PROVIDE FOR QUALITY WALKING ROUTES, AS ILLUSTRATED IN FIGURE 8.3, BELFAST CITY QUALITY WALKING ROUTE NETWORK (APPENDIX ILL).

Fails to meet requirements of BMTP (Belfast City Quality Walking Route Network)

The Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of traffic from York Street, identified as a Quality Walking Route within the BMTP, improving its amenity for pedestrians. With reference to paragraph 4.7 of the BMTP, which identifies the key design features for such routes, it is noted that the Proposed Scheme would:

- maximise footway widths on York Street and North Queen Street within the constraints of existing built infrastructure;
- increase accessibility with pavement construction and surfacing in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, along with the provision of dropped kerbs and tactile paving;
- provide improved pedestrian crossing facilities with lower traffic flows, reduced crossing widths and a replacement road lighting system, in accordance with current lighting standards;
- provide clear signage on defined pedestrian routes;
- improve walking routes along York Street, with the introduction of a continuous footway link on its eastern side between Dock Street (Yorkgate train station) and the new university campus; and
- remain consistent with TransportNI requirements and standards for pedestrian provision within Belfast City Centre.

THE BELFAST METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT PLAN GOES ON TO SET OUT KEY DESIGN FEATURES OF THE CYCLE NETWORK.

- **COHERENCE: THE CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD FORM A COHERENT ENTITY, LINKING ALL TRIP ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS; WITH A CONTINUOUS LEVEL OF PROVISION;**

- **DIRECTNESS: ROUTES SHOULD BE AS DIRECT AS POSSIBLE, BASED ON DESIRE LINES, SINCE DETOURS AND DELAYS WILL DETER USE;**
- **ATTRACTIVENESS: ROUTES MUST BE ATTRACTIVE TO CYCLISTS ON SUBJECTIVE AS WELL AS OBJECTIVE CRITERIA. LIGHTING, PERSONAL SAFETY, AESTHETICS, NOISE AND INTEGRATION WITH THE SURROUNDING AREA ARE IMPORTANT;**
- **SAFETY: DESIGNS SHOULD MINIMISE THE DANGER FOR CYCLISTS AND OTHER ROAD USERS; AND**
- **COMFORT: CYCLE ROUTES NEED SMOOTH, WELL-MAINTAINED SURFACES, REGULAR SWEEPING AND GENTLE GRADIENTS. ROUTES MUST BE CONVENIENT TO USE AND AVOID COMPLICATED MANOEUVRES AND INTERRUPTIONS.**

WE WOULD CONTEND THAT THE CYCLING PROPOSALS IN THE SCHEME FAIL ON MOST ACCOUNTS TO ACHIEVE THESE KEY DESIGN FEATURES.

TransportNI is content that the Proposed Scheme is consistent with the principles of the BMTP.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE BMTP GOES ON TO STATE 'ON HEAVILY TRAFFICKED ROADS CYCLE ROUTES WOULD BE EXPECTED TO BE PROVIDED AS FULLY SEGREGATED FACILITIES'.

CYCLING PROVISION IN BOTH DIRECTIONS ALONG YORK STREET AND THE INNER RING ROAD MUST MEET THIS REQUIREMENT.

TransportNI is content that the Proposed Scheme is consistent with the principles of the BMTP.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE PLAN STATES:

'CURRENT PROVISION FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS IS POOR BY THE STANDARDS OF SOME OTHER METROPOLITAN AREAS - AND POORER STILL WHEN COMPARED TO TOWNS AND CITIES IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE. WALKING AND CYCLING IN THE BMA ARE UNATTRACTIVE BECAUSE OF CONFLICTS WITH ROAD TRAFFIC. THE BMTP PROVIDES A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY TO REDRESS THIS BY IDENTIFYING IMPROVEMENTS THAT HAVE CONSIDERED WALKING AND CYCLING AS INTEGRAL ELEMENTS OF AN OVERALL TRANSPORT SYSTEM. THIS WILL SUPPORT THE CHANGES MADE TO DEVELOPMENT CONTROL TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES, WHICH REQUIRE MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE GREATER LEVELS OF WALKING AND CYCLING TO BE FACTORED INTO THE PLANNING OF NEW DEVELOPMENT'.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME FAILS TO DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO THIS STATEMENT.

TransportNI is content that the Proposed Scheme is consistent with the principles of the BMTP.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE DRAFT BICYCLE STRATEGY AUGUST 2014 - DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DRD)

THE DRAFT BICYCLE STRATEGY, WHICH WAS RECENTLY CONSULTED ON, SETS OUT A 25 YEAR VISION FOR A CYCLING REVOLUTION. KEY OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:

"WE ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING A NETWORK OF HIGH QUALITY, DIRECT, JOINED UP ROUTES. WE ENVISAGE A SERIES OF 'ARTERIAL ROUTES' IN OUR URBAN AREAS, WHICH WILL LARGELY MIRROR OUR ARTERIAL ROAD NETWORK AND BE IN A RADIAL FORM."

"GOING FORWARD WE WILL ENSURE THAT PROVISION IS MORE INTEGRATED AND COHERENT IN NATURE, BY PROVIDING A 'WHOLE OF ROUTE' TREATMENT. WHERE 'OPPORTUNITIES' ARISE, I.E. PROVISION OF BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE AS PART OF ROAD MAINTENANCE OR UPGRADE SCHEMES WE WILL SEIZE THESE OPPORTUNITIES, WHILST EMPHASISING HOW THESE IMPROVEMENTS FIT INTO THE WIDER VISION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND."

"IN URBAN AREAS WE WILL DEVELOP MASTERPLANS WHICH WILL BUILD ON THE 'COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK FOR THE BICYCLE' CONNECTING WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO TRAVEL FROM / GET TO."

"WE PLAN TO DEVELOP NEW, BEST PRACTICE DESIGN GUIDANCE WHICH WILL BE USED BY THOSE DESIGNING FOR CYCLING. THIS GUIDANCE WILL IDENTIFY WAYS THAT JUNCTIONS, ROUNDABOUTS AND CYCLE LANES CAN BE MADE SAFER AND MADE TO FEEL SAFER."

THE DRAFT BICYCLE STRATEGY ALSO SET OUT A ROAD USER HIERARCHY WHICH IT ADAPTED FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT (2007), MANUAL FOR STREETS WHICH SETS OUT HOW THE MOST VULNERABLE ROAD USERS I.E. PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FIRST IN URBAN HIGHWAY SCHEMES, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY GIVING THEM PRIORITY AT ALL LOCATIONS.

WE WOULD CONTEND THAT WHILE THIS DRD DOCUMENT IS STILL IN DRAFT FORMAT THE PROPOSED SCHEME SHOULD RECOGNISE AND RESPOND TO IT. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE NEW UPDATED DESIGN STANDARDS FOR CYCLE ROUTES, ROAD JUNCTIONS AND BUS STOPS FOR CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE.

The layout of the Proposed Scheme was subject to consultation with DRD Cycling Unit in February 2014. A response was received in May 2014 prior to publication of their draft Bicycle Strategy. In their response, Cycling Unit was promoting the provision of cycling routes to and from north Belfast via North Queen Street and Nelson Street rather than York Street.

It was recognised that DRD Cycling Unit were developing their strategy for Belfast at that time and TransportNI is content that our proposals are now consistent with their Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

RELOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

THIS IS PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT REGENERATION PROJECT IN THE RECENT HISTORY OF THE CITY. THE CHOSEN SITE FOR THE UNIVERSITY, WHILE ADJACENT TO THE PROPOSED SCHEME, WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE WIDER AREA AROUND IT.

SOME 13,000 STUDENTS AND 2,000 STAFF WILL BE LOCATED AT THE CAMPUS, POTENTIALLY GENERATING SOME 30,000 LOCAL JOURNEYS PER DAY, MOST LIKELY BY WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE PLANNING APPLICATIONS ALREADY BEING PREPARED OR LODGED TO PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION AROUND AND CLOSE TO THE PROPOSED SCHEME.

HIGH QUALITY WALKING AND CYCLING LINKS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT SUCH AS BELFAST RAPID TRANSIT, YORKGATE RAILWAY STATION AND THE PROPOSED STATION AT DUNBAR LINK WILL NEED TO BE PROVIDED IN ADDITION TO LINKS TO LAGANSIDE, TITANIC QUARTER AND NCN 93.

THESE LINKAGES WILL ALSO ENABLE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AROUND THE PROJECT AREA, WHERE CAR OWNERSHIP MAY BE LOW, TO ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY, IN TITANIC QUARTER AND THE CITY CENTRE.

WE CONTEND THAT THE PROPOSED SCHEME DOES NOT ADEQUATELY PROVIDE FOR THIS SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN LOCAL JOURNEYS IN AND THROUGH THIS AREA, WHICH THE UNIVERSITY WILL GENERATE.

The Proposed Scheme is considered to address the potential future demand for pedestrians and cyclists along York Street, following the relocation of the Ulster University campus. This is evident in the provision of cycle lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions and the provision of continuous pedestrian links, including controlled crossings, along the proposed footways on each side of York Street. The proposed southbound bus lane also provides an opportunity to improve direct bus links to the new campus from North Belfast and the strategic road network.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME

THESE COMMENTS RELATE TO SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE SCHEME:

SCHEME-SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

'TO MAINTAIN ACCESS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS'

THE CURRENT PROVISION IS PARTICULARLY POOR IN WHAT IS A SHATTERED URBAN ENVIRONMENT DOMINATED IN THE MOST PART BY ROADS/VEHICLE MOVEMENTS. EFFECTIVELY WHAT EXISTS IS A MAJOR BARRIER TO PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS AND IS PREVENTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVE TRAVEL TO THE NORTH OF THE CITY. THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE OFFERS THE POTENTIAL TO CONNECT THE CITY CENTRE WITH THE SHORE ROAD/ANTRIM ROAD SEGMENT OF THE CITY. AS WE PREVIOUSLY POINTED OUT IN OUR EARLIER LETTER WHERE GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE IS PROVIDED SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT INCREASES, FOR EXAMPLE IN SOUTH BELFAST. THIS WOULD BE IN LINE WITH THE BMTP OBJECTIVES AND THE DRAFT BICYCLE STRATEGY.

IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXISTING INADEQUATE LEVEL OF PROVISION, THE OBJECTIVES IN THE BMTP, THE DRAFT BICYCLE STRATEGY AND THE IMPACT OF THE NEW UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, THIS SCHEME-SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE IS EFFECTIVELY REDUNDANT.

Improve access for Pedestrians/Cyclists

The Proposed Scheme has been developed to optimise provision for non-motorised users within the physical constraints of the existing built environment, and the competing engineering constraints of the proposed road links.

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great George's Street. It is considered that these changes, and additional improvements to each of the remaining signalised junctions would benefit non-motorised road users through improved amenity on these routes.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

For cyclists, it is noted that no dedicated cycling facilities currently exist on York Street. The Proposed Scheme improves access to the City Centre for cyclists by providing mandatory cycle lanes in each direction.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

TransportNI is content that the Proposed Scheme is consistent with the principles of the BMTP and the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland.

TYPICAL CARRIAGEWAY DETAIL YORK STREET OVERBRIDGES (LOOKING NORTH)

OUT OF A TOTAL WIDTH OF 27.2M ONLY 1.5M HAS BEEN ALLOCATED SPECIFICALLY FOR CYCLING, WHILE 3.2M ARE ALLOCATED FOR SEPARATION STRIPS AND 6M FOR FOOTWAY.

WE WOULD CONTEND THAT THE TOTAL SPACE AVAILABLE COULD BE REALLOCATED TO PROVIDE TWO 2M WIDE SEGREGATED CYCLE LANES AND MEET ALL THE OTHER SPATIAL REQUIREMENTS.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

JUNCTIONS

CYCLISTS ARE AT THEIR MOST VULNERABLE AT ROAD JUNCTIONS AND THE PROPOSALS WHICH INCLUDE ADVANCE STOP LINES UP TO 5 LANES WIDE ARE IMPRACTICAL. MUCH MORE THOUGHT NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO THE DESIGN OF ALL JUNCTIONS, INCLUDING DANISH STYLE TWO PHASE TURNING FOR CYCLISTS.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

CONCLUSION

WE ARE EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE BEING PROPOSED AND WE HAVE SET OUT OUR RATIONALE FOR OBJECTING. WE ARE, HOWEVER, CONVINCED THAT THE SITUATION CAN BE RECTIFIED THROUGH THE REDISTRIBUTION OF ROAD SPACE AND REDESIGN OF JUNCTIONS. THESE CHANGES CAN, WE BELIEVE, BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE GENERAL LAYOUT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME, FOR EXAMPLE, WITHOUT THE NEED TO WIDEN THE YORK STREET BRIDGE.

WE WOULD WELCOME AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS OUR CONCERNS WITH THE DEPARTMENT.

As you will be aware, following the statutory consultation period, it is noted that TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by this response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

The following presentation was made by Mr Gordon Clarke on behalf of Sustrans on the afternoon of Day 2.

‘I am Gordon Clarke, the national director of Sustrans in Ireland. What I would like to do is say a little bit about Sustrans and a little bit of the background information to where we have got to today, and go through our objections and how we consider they are being dealt with and some conclusions at the end.

Sustrans is a leading UK based sustainable transport charity, limited by

guarantee. Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways which benefit their health and the environment. Our mission is to influence practice and shape policy and projects so everyone can travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. Our interest is particularly in developing public transport and active travel, walking and cycling.

We try by working with others to take every opportunity to achieve our aims and objectives. In this case we have engaged with the Department in order to ensure that public transport and active travel, walking and cycling are fully integrated into this scheme.

A little bit of context about that. Sustrans has actively supported Belfast on the Move and the introduction of bus lanes and, of course, Belfast Rapid Transit. We have actively supported the Belfast public bike share scheme and successfully provided on road cycle training in preparation for its launch. We are currently jointly working with the Freight Transport Association delivering a safe urban driving course for HGV drivers in the city, and we have worked with DRD on the development of the recently published Bike Life Report, and I will refer to that later on.

We have a vision for Belfast and I think that all we say should be seen in that context. We want to see a thriving City Centre, a place that people want to shop in, live, work, visit and enjoy, a pleasant place with safe spaces and good air quality, a place easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. So all we say and do is in that context.

A little bit of background to our involvement in this project. Consultants URS wrote to us on 24th February 2014 advising us about the preparation of the statutory EIA. We examined the proposals and wrote back to the consultant on 28th March detailing our comments and concerns, and I will just highlight a few of those. We highlighted the great opportunity that this scheme presented to improve cycling and walking in this area which is very poor at the moment.

We recommended the highest quality infrastructure provision segregated from traffic where possible in order to encourage those who feel vulnerable, cycling, including women and children, thus enabling them to use high quality safe provision.

We highlighted the potential increase in cycling associated with the relocation of the University of Ulster and suggested major north, south, east and west segregated cycleways. We specifically highlighted the underpass at Whitla Street as an important linkage and potential linkages for Titanic Quarter across the proposed bridge at Corporation Square included in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan.

We highlighted the need to provide good walking and cycling linkages to public transport hubs such as York Street, Yorkgate Station and a proposed halt at Dunbar Link.

Finally we offered to discuss these ideas to help reach agreement on appropriate cycle provision. Unfortunately at that time the Department did not take us up on this offer to discuss these ideas and with very little change to the plan subsequently published the final layout and put it on public display in February 2015.

It was immediately clear and extremely disappointing that the comments referred to a year earlier set out in our letter had not had any significant impact on the layout proposals. So, on 9th March Sustrans formally objected to the proposed scheme. In April 2015 following initial informal discussions with the

Department it was agreed to set up meetings between Sustrans and DRD TNI in order to see if Sustrans concerns regarding the scheme could be addressed. We were much encouraged by this approach.

A design review workshop was held with the project team on 13th May led by Sustrans Senior Design Engineer, Tony Russell. The workshop led to a series of meetings over the summer and numerous exchanges of information from Sustrans to the project team. These included sketch drawings, illustrations of junctions, bus stops, segregated cycle lanes, and a lot of other information.

During the various meetings as well as providing technical input, Sustrans also provided a Position Paper on 26th May. Among other things recommended, the adoption of Transport for London, London Cycling Design Standards was included in that, and it is pleasing to note that these were adopted by the Department in June 2015, and we look forward to these design standards being applied to all new schemes. It also asked for the production of a plan illustrating wider area cycling and pedestrian context linkages, and unfortunately we feel this suggestion and idea has not been fully acted upon.

Sustrans invested a great deal of time and resources at our own expense during this period, and while we are very encouraged by the Department's response set out in the revised drawings and report, the Public Inquiry Technical Paper, York Street Cycling Provision Summary, we have some remaining concerns that are still unresolved.

We would want to put on record our appreciation of the Department's willingness to engage with us, we think this is a very good process and we were much encouraged and feel it has been a constructive and productive process.

I suppose I would like to especially thank Roy Spiers for his role in this and wish him well for his forthcoming retirement and hope he will be doing a lot of cycling during that time as well.

Since the publication of the current proposals three other relevant documents have been published and we highlight some aspects of these here.

The first is the Department's own document Changing Gear, a bicycle strategy for Northern Ireland, and I think that has a lot of relevance to this project. It was in draft form during the design development and it has now been published in full. The strategy sets out a lot of things, and it aims to promote the bicycle as a mode of transport. It is very important that we see the bicycle in the same light as we see cars, buses and trains, that the bicycle is a form of transport and should be regarded as such.

The strategy explicitly states it is important that people feel safe and comfortable using the bicycle for every day journeys and in heavily trafficked areas such as this cyclists should be segregated.

The second publication, Bike Life, which is a joint publication between the Department and Sustrans, includes a major survey of over 1,100 Belfast citizens and it highlights here some of the key findings. Again, I think this is very relevant to this and other road schemes. The majority of residents in Belfast think positively about riding a bike, 42% think Belfast is a very good place to ride. There is a very high level, 8 out of 10 people supported much higher levels of investment in cycling, and over half the people interviewed, 53%, who either don't cycle, currently cycle, would like to cycle but have a reservation about safety.

The number one issue that they would like to see addressed is segregated cycling. So that bicycle report has highlighted, I think, what we have been

saying and reinforces our point that good cycling infrastructure in urban areas, particularly heavily trafficked areas like this should be segregated, and that is a very important point.

The other one that was published a little earlier is the Belfast Active Travel Action Plan and it contains a lot about motivating people to think about travelling differently, to think about walking and cycling. I will not go into the detail but it is a good reference document and supports the case we are making for enhanced cycling infrastructure within the city.

Dealing specifically then with our objections. We objected on three particular grounds and I want to highlight the objections and then indicate how we feel the Department has responded and indicate any areas where we feel more work needs to be done.

The first objection was that the proposed scheme fails to meet the requirements for the provision of walking and cycling as set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan.

The second one; the scheme fails to meet the aspirations and objectives for cycling as set out in the Department for Regional Development's as then draft bicycle strategy, now the document which is Changing Gear. That was a vision that the Minister then had for cycling in the city, and we kind of felt that this project just didn't come close to helping deliver that vision.

The third objective was the scheme fails to give due recognition to the significant impact on walking and cycling that the current relocation of the University will have on this particular area.

If you are happy I will now go through the objections.

Objection one was the failure to comply with the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. The proposed scheme fails to meet the requirements for the provision of walking and cycling as set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015.

The scheme goes some way to recognise and provide for the cycling network, however the layout failed to properly illustrate connections at the Dock Street Brougham Street area, including links to York Street Station and the NCN by means of the underpass recently upgraded and a crossing put in at Whitla Street by the Department.

The revised scheme provides somewhat better pedestrian routes but fails to include proper mitigation measures for the micro climate (wind and rain) at the York Street Bridge. Much more could be done to improve the pedestrian space.

The Metropolitan Plan highlighted a number of key design features and I will go through these. The first one was coherence. The cycling infrastructure should form a coherent entity linking all trip origins and destinations with a continuous level of provision.

We feel the scheme because it doesn't connect through to, for example, Dock Street junction, it doesn't achieve that properly.

Directness, routes should be as direct as possible based on desire line since detours and delays will deter use. We believe that the revised scheme does provide much more direct routes.

Safety: Design should minimise the dangers for cyclists and other road users. The revised scheme that has been presented is a much safer scheme, the cycle lanes are more continuous and in general segregated from other road users. However, we would preferred to see a kerb segregation rather than the use of white lines and wands. So the segregation is not the best solution in

our view.

The advanced stop line which is illustrated at the Dock Street/Brougham Street junction remains in the scheme and is both impractical and dangerous for cyclists. You can see it there. While we acknowledge the Department's commitment, the Department has committed to address these issues as part of a separate project, we cannot understand why this has not been addressed as part of this revised layout.

If you look at the Streets Ahead proposals, the two phase right turn has been incorporated, but why we were not able to persuade the Department, even though it is not part of the physical scheme ultimately implemented, how it connects through to Yorkgate Station and on through to Whitla Street, I just couldn't understand. That was a real disappointment, but if you look there a lot of the other features that we had argued for, the bus stops, the internal segregation for bus stops, a lot of good design features have been incorporated in the scheme.

One of the other design features in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan is attractiveness; routes must be attractive to cyclists on subjective as well as objective criteria, lighting, personal safety, aesthetics, noise and integration of the surrounding areas are important. Given the harsh urban nature of this area and the road infrastructure being provided it is hard to envisage how the routes could be made more attractive. Consideration to be given to the installation of public art, the colour of surface materials, lighting and other features.

Comfort, cycle routes need smooth well maintained surfaces, regular sweeping and gentle gradients. Routes must be convenient to use and avoid complicated manoeuvres and interruptions. The revised layout will be more comfortable for users with such measures as the bus stop bypasses and I have highlighted those.

The Metropolitan Plan states: "Only on heavily trafficked roads cycle routes would be expected to be provided as fully segregated facilities."

The revised schemes does go a long way to meet this requirement, however, it fails to provide fully segregated cycle routes. And I have mentioned the segregation as suggested by white line and wands is acceptable but not the best possible solution.

The plan goes on to state:

"The current provision for pedestrians and cyclists is poor by the standards of some other Metropolitan areas."

This is referring to Belfast:

"And poorer still when compared to towns and cities in continental Europe. Walking and cycling in the Belfast Metropolitan Area are unattractive because of conflicts with road traffic."

The plan provides a significant opportunity to redress this by identifying improvements that have considered walking and cycling as integral elements of an overall transport system. This will support the changes made to development control traffic assessment procedures which require measures to encourage greater levels of walking and cycling to be factored into the planning of new developments.

The revised scheme indicates the Department's intention to provide the appropriate levels of infrastructure provision, qualified by my comments earlier, and when joined up properly with the wider network should help to encourage more cyclists.

In summary, it is disappointing that the design accepted that the original scheme was providing a standard of cycling infrastructure equivalent to that already existing in the city, and while the Department's own technical paper suggests that they did refer to the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan we cannot see any evidence of that in the original layout. Had the scheme originally fully accepted the standard set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan then perhaps we would not have had to make this objection.

The downside of the Department's failure to provide the standards from the outset is that despite this being a brand new layout, effectively cycling provision has had to be retrofitted in the scheme with the inevitable compromises that this brings, for example, in terms of cycle lane width and form of segregation.

So I suppose I am expressing a disappointment that we didn't get engaged earlier, that cycling wasn't integrated as a transport mode along the public transport, and therefore the scheme which is hugely better than it was previously presented, doesn't quite deliver all we would have wanted. There are compromises in it and that is disappointing but, nonetheless, it is a significant step forward.

Our second objection highlighted, I mentioned the Department of Regional Development's 25 year vision for cycling which is now Changing Gear. Again it talked about committing to creating a network of high quality direct joined up routes. They envisage a series of arterial routes in other urban areas which will largely mirror our arterial road network and be a radial form. This was the Minister's vision and, as previously stated, the revised scheme doesn't really deliver that but it does suggest that there is an opportunity when it is joined up with other projects that it will actually deliver that.

This is the Changing Gear draft document. We planned to develop new best practice design guidance which would be used by those designing for cycling. This guidance will identify ways that junctions, roundabouts and cycle lanes can be made safer and made to feel safer, and it is recognised again, I made the point that the Department have adopted the new Transport for London Cycling Design Standards and I think that is a huge progressive step by the Department, and it is very welcome.

So the York Street cycling provision could have been a flagship project for the bicycle strategy from the outset. It is recognised now that the revised layout contains some new innovative design solutions, I mentioned the two stage right turn which is really exciting, and we are delighted to see that. The bus stop bypass is really good, and so there are a lot of really good things in the scheme and we look forward to these being integrated into all new transport plans and projects, with the bicycle being recognised as just as important to transport mode as the car, bus and train.

Our third objection, the final one, is to do with the relocation of the University of Ulster. Now this is perhaps the most significant regeneration project in the recent history of Belfast. The chosen site for the University adjacent to the York Street Interchange will have a significant impact on the wider area around it, and in particular increases pedestrians and cyclists in the area. Some 1,300 students and 2,000 staff will be located in the campus, potentially generating some 30,000 local journeys per day, mostly by walking, cycling and public transport.

We understand that there are planning applications currently being prepared or lodged to provide significant student accommodation around and close to the Interchange. High quality walking and cycling links to public transport such as

Belfast Rapid Transit, Yorkgate Railway Station, and the proposed future station at Dunbar Link will need to be provided in addition to links to Laganside, Titanic Quarter and the NCN 93. These linkages will also enable local communities around the project where car ownership may be low, to access opportunities for employment at the University, in Titanic Quarter and the City Centre.

The original and revised scheme provides better road connections between the Westlink, the M2 Foreshore and the M3 Sydenham Bypass. The opportunity to address and improve pedestrian and cycling linkages, we feel, has not been fully realised. The relocation of the University to this location will transform this area beyond all recognition, and while we with our limited resources cannot fully articulate this change, simple issues such as the linkages between York Gate Station and the University, links to the Titanic Quarter and the proposed student accommodation, we feel have not been fully assessed and identified and incorporated into what implications they would have for the scheme.

Inevitably these linkages, like the cycling provision, will be retrofitted around the junction rather than being an integral part of it. Such major schemes as this in the future should be regarded not simply as road improvements but as major regeneration projects with a much wider perspective.

In conclusion, the process and engagement between Sustrans and the Department was really good and we feel productive. However, it is disappointing that it did not take place a year earlier, and that a final plan failed to fully connect the scheme with a wider existing and proposed walking and cycling network. I have highlighted that on a number of occasions, such as the transport hub at York Gate Station.

It is also unfortunate that while the cycling provision now proposed is significantly better than the original layout it could have been much better had it been considered as an integral part of the overall plan from the outset. There would have been fewer compromises, for example, cycle lane widths would have been consistent throughout and kerb separation achieved.

The adoption and application to this project by the Department of the London Cycling Design Standards during the discussions with Sustrans was an extremely important and positive decision, and we look forward with anticipation to see these applied to other projects in the City and throughout the Province. We feel a project of this scale and importance has the potential to incorporate and improve all forms of transport and act as a catalyst for regeneration.

The approach by the Department, we felt, was too narrow and we would like to see projects like this having a wider focus on other forms of transport and, indeed, the opportunity to create regeneration in an area such as this.

The Department, when planning future projects should take note of the recently published Bike Life Report jointly sponsored by Sustrans and the Department. This report shows there is very substantial support for cycling, and more than half of Belfast citizens indicated they would like to cycle providing there were safe segregated cycle routes. So a scheme like this could actually proactively encourage cycling if the right infrastructure is provided.

The impact on this area in the relocation of the University of Ulster will be very significant with many walking and cycling journeys within and around the area. Provision needs to be further investigated and if necessary adjustments made to the scheme. It is beyond our remit to actually begin to imagine what impact the University will have, but we certainly feel it is something that needs further

investigation.

So we have actively worked with the Department. It has been a good working relationship. I think it is a good model for the future addressing objections, and we would have preferred not to have to object and had the scheme right in the first place, but we are where we are. It has been a good process, we have enjoyed it. It has been productive, and there is more work to be done, and we are happy to continue our engagement with the Department'.

Mr Spiers opened the TNI response to Mr Clarke's presentation by saying that the issues associated with the TNI development of Policy Documents and therefore major Schemes had, to an extent, been something of a moving feast. The London Cycling Guidelines had been adopted in June 2015 and had not been available when the design was implemented at the outset. The Cycling Strategy was formally adopted in August 2015.

Initially, TNI had met its requirements under BMTP, but Mr Spiers had been quite happy to engage with Sustrans on the basis of their objections and on the development of the scheme to its present stage.

He pointed out that the scheme had limits, in that it did not extend beyond the Brougham Street Junction or into the Frederick Street Junction. Those were issues outside the boundaries of the current Scheme, and TNI wanted to ensure that it connected into them. TNI would take forward proposals through their Cycling Unit to address the connection between York Street and the rail station and the cycle network through Whitla Street to maintain a continual connection. He added that he was always at pains to limit 'project creep', and these were the boundaries.

The other side of the Frederick Street junction was part of the 'Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3', and the required revisions would be undertaken as part of that project. The YSI Scheme connects into this but TNI would not be undertaking those improvements as part of the YSI project.

He added that the engagement with Sustrans has been robust and very direct and he believed that a satisfactory solution had been developed.

With reference to separation using wands, white lines etc., TNI could implement whatever was agreed under the Belfast Standards in terms of the Cycling Project Programme Board as long as it was approved as a standard acceptable across the whole of Belfast.

Mr Megarry drew attention to two words from Mr Clarke's presentation and the first was 'compromise'. He believed that this was the point which had been reached and he agreed that it was unfortunate that TNI had not taken on board comments with regard to cycling at an earlier stage.

His second word was 'constraints' and he wanted to highlight that they had been restrained in certain sections, particularly the York Street corridor by the existing built environment. There had been a finite amount of space in which to manage the footways, cycleways and bus lanes.

On the proposed new York Street Bridge there were constraints relating to the width of the structure. Mr Megarry added that It had not been said thus far at the Inquiry, but York Street was very much like a 3D puzzle and small changes in one area could unravel and have a significant impact elsewhere. So, the ability to widen the York Street overbridge had knock on effects to clearances on other links and the design was virtually at the maximum of what could reasonably be achieved.

Responding to a query from the Assistant Inspector, concerning restraints and effects and the implications of widening the bridge by a half metre, Mr Megarry said

that widening would affect the clearance of the Dargan Bridge and this was the key constraint at that point.

Referring to the fact that Mr Spiers had mentioned that there were certain difficulties with regard to kerb separation, a TRL Report had looked at measures to implement light segregation. This study was undertaken in 2014 and it looked at various options such as providing kerbs, wands and what are called armadillos, which are little reflective devices stuck on to a white line.

The wands had been incorporated into the revised cycling proposal, and Mr Megarry quoted from the TRL Report which said 'The wands were the only physical separation which offered improved perception of safety and usability over white line segregation for all road users'. Trials were set up which looked at cyclists using kerbed cycleways, just white lines and wands. The tests included pedestrians, motorcyclists and vehicle users, including heavy goods vehicles. The results of that analysis indicated that the wands were the only physical segregation which offered improved perception over white lines for all road users. Motorcyclists tended to move further away from it when they experience a kerb, whereas there was a smaller movement away from a wand.

Summing up, Mr Megarry said again that it had been about compromise, and he was grateful for the progress which had been achieved.

Responding to a question from Mr McGuinness, Mr Clarke confirmed that he saw York Street as being an important part of a proposed cycle route network being developed by the Department's own Cycling Unit and that it would provide access from the City up North Street towards the railway station and the new University.

Mr Wright commented that he thought Mr Megarry had misinterpreted or given the incorrect impression, in that he had said categorically that it would not be possible to accommodate further width expansion of the York Street Bridge due to constraints. He added that this was true if you wanted to have a very strong concrete reinforcement underneath the low bridge structure. He suggested that it would be possible from an engineering perspective to provide cantilevered side extensions to accommodate the low load requirements of pedestrians and cyclists.

He pointed out that bicycles can cope with surprising levels of camber, as can be seen in a velodrome and especially if a cyclist had experienced cycling on a very steep slope. A cantilevered and sloped surface could provide a means to widen the propose York Street bridge.

He concluded by saying that he thought everyone had noticed the importance that Mr Clarke had attached to wishing to engage with TNI. He believed that Mr Clarke had been very diplomatic and patient with having to retrofit the Scheme with a less than perfect infrastructure to meet the needs of cyclists,.

Inspectors' Comments (Gordon Clarke, Sustrans)

The concerns of the Objector recorded above, the TNI responses and the detailed information presented and discussed at the Inquiry have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Gordon Clarke, Sustrans)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.2.33 Objection number..... OBJ33
Objectors Name.....Jonathan Hobbs, NI Greenways
Date submitted..... 10 March 2015
NIMVO plot number.....N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above objection and responds as follows:

I AM WRITING TO OBJECT TO THE CURRENT PROPOSAL FOR YORK STREET INTERCHANGE. SOME OF THE FINER DETAILS OF THE OBJECTION ARE CONTAINED IN THE ARTICLE (LINKED BELOW) BUT THE MAIN THRUST OF THE OBJECTION IS SIMPLE. FOR AN URBAN ROAD PROJECT BETWEEN £125M AND £165M IT IS UNACCEPTABLE IN THIS DAY AND AGE FOR A) THE PLAN OBJECTIVES AND B) THE ENGINEERS WORKING TO THOSE OBJECTIVES TO CLAIM NOT TO HAVE RESPONSIBILITY BEYOND THE BENEFITS TO MOTORISED USERS. THAT THERE IS NO HIGH QUALITY SPACE FOR CYCLING ON A BLANK CANVAS PROJECT IS SHOCKING (WHAT IS THERE IS TIRED, OUT OF DATE AND THE SAME RUBBISH WHICH HAS SUPPRESSED CYCLING LEVELS) AND MANY OF THE DESIGNED ELEMENTS POSITIVELY PROMOTE CONFLICT BETWEEN ROAD USERS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE LEFT TURN SLIP ROADS AT CITYSIDE RETAIL AND BROUGHAM STREET.

Non-Motorised User Audit Process

The Proposed Scheme has been developed to optimise provision for non-motorised users within the physical constraints of the existing built environment, and the competing engineering constraints of the proposed road links.

In accordance with Standard HD42 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, the design team has completed the non-motorised user audit process. Its objectives are to:

- encourage all reasonable opportunities to improve the service offered to non-motorised users;
- prevent conditions for non-motorised users being worsened by the introduction of the Proposed Scheme; and
- document design decisions that affect non-motorised users.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

OTHER POINTS TO NOTE:

- **1.5M ON-ROAD CYCLE LANES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE – SAFE, SEPARATED SPACE FOR CYCLING IS NEEDED TO ENCOURAGE GREATER UPTAKE ACROSS ALL ABILITIES / AGE GROUPS**

- **BUS LANES ARE NOT CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE & CYCLE TRACKS NEED TO BYPASS *BEHIND* BUS STOPS**
- **CYCLE LANE NORTHBOUND, BUS LANE SOUTHBOUND – SHOWS THE INCONSISTENT APPROACH RIGHTLY CRITICISED IN THE DRD BICYCLE STRATEGY (DID NO-ONE READ THAT?)**
- **HUNDREDS/THOUSANDS OF *ADDITIONAL* DAILY CYCLING JOURNEYS ARE BEING PLANNED FOR AT THE NEW ULSTER UNIVERSITY, BUT APPARENTLY NOT BY DRD**
- **THE ‘ADVANCED STOP LINE’ IS A REDUNDANT DESIGN FEATURE WHICH SHOWS EXTREME LAZINESS IN ROAD DESIGN – KEEPING THE 5-LANE ASL IN PLACE AT DUNBAR LINK IS BEYOND PARODY**
- **THE OVERPASS PLAN REPEATS A MISTAKE MADE BY THE SAME ENGINEERS ON THE GROSVENOR BRIDGE – IT DOESN’T NEED WIDENED TO ACCOMMODATE CYCLING, JUST THE SPACE REALLOCATED**
- **THE USE OF TRAFFIC SEPARATION STRIPS (KERBED AND HATCHED) INSTEAD OF USING THE SPACE FOR HIGH QUALITY CYCLE ROUTES BORDERS ON BRAZEN ARROGANCE**
- **CYCLING IS NOT TREATED AS TRANSPORT IN THIS PLAN – IN REALITY IT NEEDS DIRECT (AND SAFE) LINKS INSTEAD OF BEING AN AFTERTHOUGHT**

[HTTPS://NIGREENWAYS.WORDPRESS.COM/2015/03/06/YORKSTREETINTERCHANGE/](https://nigreenways.wordpress.com/2015/03/06/yorkstreetinterchange/)

Cycling Provision

As mentioned previously, following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

‘Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I noted on the revised plans that there is an element that I have not seen to date, so I will address that and I will try not to cover too much of the ground that Gordon (Clarke) covered.

I noticed yesterday there were about 33 objections to the scheme of which 20 were based on the unsuitability of the plans for non-motorised users, specifically for cycling. I think that balance gives some indication of how much value the people of Belfast place on being able to move around safely by bicycle. I think Sustrans had referenced that with their Bike Life report.

Far more qualified and experienced voices are tackling suitability of the overall scheme in terms of cost and urban impact, but for my part I will remain reactive to the draft plans as presented by TransportNI to ensure that cycling as a distinct form of transport which requires its own space and support to thrive is properly catered for in whatever scheme emerges.

My objections were based on the original plan and were conveyed as eight points sent to TransportNI. To summarise, the York St Interchange plan was, in essence, a blank canvas. Standard setting, high quality cycling routes can be designed in from the beginning rather than the typically more difficult retrofitting, instead the plans included designs which took the worst elements

of Belfast cycling routes, advisory cycle lanes, bus lanes, essentially sharing with or fitting in around motor vehicles.

To TransportNI's credit they took the criticism on the chin and came back with a revised and greatly improved plan for the York Street element. This was, I believe, shared with all objectors and their efforts must be welcome in this. I would have been content to withdraw my objection and recommend to others to do so, subject to some final revisions to the plan which were fed back to TransportNI through Sustrans. It is unfortunate that this opportunity was missed, so I find myself here today.

It would help you, Mr Inspector, if I run through each of the eight points to see what has changed and what remains in the overall objection.

So, 1.5 metres on-road cycle lanes are not acceptable. Safe separated space for cycling is needed. This has been mostly addressed in the revision, it is really the charge that the design was repeating the mistakes that we see in what we currently call the Belfast Cycling Network.

The original design included a northbound 1.5, mostly advisory cycle lane, little more than shared space with general traffic and no protection, and the cycle lane itself disappeared at junctions creating uncertainty. The revised design increases the cycling space to two metres with light segregation with bollards to begin the process of physically separating bicycles from motor vehicles. This is good, but it could be better. The 0.5 metre space required at a northbound kerb separated space is possible by adjusting the hatching and central partition areas as seen. Light segregation with bollards actually should be added to the southbound cycle lane which is a new addition to the revised plan in order to increase the quality of that route.

Objection two was bus lanes are not cycling infrastructure and cycle tracks need to bypass behind bus stops. As I have said I have not seen this new plan so this part has been now completely changed, where before we had the cycle lane going in front of the bus stop, and this is the original revision. I now understand that both of these bus stops have a cycle path which goes behind them which has completely addressed that problem. That is good to see, and that is just an example outside the door of why that was not a good idea in the first place.

Objection three; the cycle lane northbound, and the bus lane southbound, this was an inconsistent approach. This again has been addressed by the addition of a southbound cycle lane. Again this is just referencing the southbound bus stop bypass which has now been added in, which is good to see.

Objection four; so we will now have hundreds or thousands of additional cycling journeys planned for at the new University, but perhaps not by DRD. I just worry that this has not been really understood yet. I am not sure whether there have been any projections made to assess the expected rise in bicycle movements over the next five to 10 years in the area. And there are four main points to that:

- The relocation of the Ulster University.
- The new student accommodation development on and beside York Street.
- The future expansion of Belfast bike hire, which is highly likely given the success of the scheme.
- An overall targeted rise in cycling use with developments from DRD's Bicycling Strategy, which was published in August, and the Belfast Delivery Plan yet to be published.

Just to set that in context, it is really expected to be a prime corridor for cycling movements in the near future. To the left we have the Ulster University campus. We have major student accommodation being planned around Great Patrick Street to the side of York Street, and then to the north end we have the main railway station which will serve that student population plus, very simply, we have a large Tesco which would be the main grocery shopping area for that new population.

Student accommodation is being planned and built in this area with minimum car parking provision and a level of bicycle parking provision unheard of in Belfast. Just as one example, 28 to 30 Great Patrick St is a development being planned for approximately 529 residents with just 24 car parking spaces and a staggering 326 bicycle spaces. This is unheard of in Belfast, and that is just one building. This is from DRD's Bicycle Strategy, and it is for the Inspectors to assess whether without the additional design changes being suggested here, or this future bicycle traffic projection, which I feel needs to be done, the York Street Interchange needs to live up to this standard.

Objection five was the advanced stop line, I think Gordon has mentioned it a little bit, this is a redundant design feature which shows laziness in road design. The revisions begin to address this, and I appreciate that this junction is strictly out of scope but it is interesting that TransportNI have started to make proposed changes to this junction in response to criticism.

It would be my suggestion that both the Dunbar Link and Brougham Street/Dock Street junctions should be brought in in some way into this scheme, at least with a revised design along this line, if not budget allocated against it to ensure non-motorised users are not disadvantaged from the impact of the new road layouts in between, which these junctions serve. The revisions are interesting, if not quite adequate, but this can be worked on between TransportNI Sustrans and the DRD Cycling Unit.

Objections six and seven are really rolled into the same, the overpass plan repeats a mistake made by the same engineers on the Grosvenor Road Bridge. It does not need to be widened in order to accommodate cycling, just the space reallocated, and this has been mostly addressed.

The use of traffic separation strips, both kerbed and hatched, instead of using the space for high quality cycle routes borders on - I apologise for the language - brazen arrogance. I do believe that criticism has been taken on board and has mostly been addressed. I think "project creep" is the term that was used, this idea of what cycling campaigners were asking for was a widening of the bridge. There was plenty of space to work with on the bridge, it is just the allocation of that space was simply a series of choices with cycling at the very back of the queue. The original design seemed to value the safety of separating general traffic flows all heading northbound over the need for high quality space for cycling. However, as suspected, the space was found to create that extra cycling space in the revision with a minimum of fuss. Again this just references the bus stop bypass which has been added in. So that is fine.

Then the final point which is more of a summary, I think mostly addressed by the revisions to the plan. However, my objection remains in place because these few final problems need to be addressed, and the most dangerous of those would be the last, which I would say is the most problematic design feature, again it was referenced by Gordon (Clarke), which has been retained in this revision, the northbound slip lane from York Street onto Brougham Street. The cycle lane is left hanging between two lanes of traffic in this design

and there is a major point of conflict as vehicles turning left from York Street to Brougham Street need to cross the cycle lane to do so at the same point as cyclists are moving from the bus stop by-pass right onto the road. This really leaves cyclists dangerously exposed and it is a major point of conflict which has been kept in the subsequent revisions.

This is a major barrier to inexperienced, nervous or young people who are cycling. It is questionable whether the volume of traffic using this section to turn left necessitates a slip road or slip lane at all. Removing this northbound slip lane and continuing the cycle lane to the junction moves that point of conflict to a more manageable area where mitigating features can be easily created.

Similarly on the southbound section there is a possibility of conflict between cycling traffic and left turning general traffic from Dock Street, but this really depends on the signal phasing. Again, it is questionable if there is a need given the level of traffic that will be turning from Dock Street or coming from York Street to access the M2.

I really feel that this whole junction needs to be 'humanised', promoting the needs of non-motorised users above that of vehicles. And just a reminder again of the proximity of Yorkgate Station, and the non-motorised journeys that it will generate in the context of many thousands of Ulster University students moving into the area.

The other points that I have raised need to be judged against the hierarchy of design consideration which was published in the DRD Bicycle strategy in August, and I hope that the suggestions that I have made for some final changes to the cycling elements makes sense in this light and are considered by the Inspectors to be fair and proportionate within such a large important and costly scheme.

To summarise there are actually just four main outstanding issues which need to be addressed to bring the cycling element up to a good standard, and they are:

1. The removal of the Brougham slip lane.
2. The bus stop bypass has been addressed, and that is fine.
3. Hard separation on the northbound cycle lane with 0.5 metre kerb separation.
4. The light segregation with the wands going southbound to separate bus traffic from cycle traffic, for all of the reasons that were laid out before, and further work on junctions at both ends.

In all consideration of these issues the worry is that building in inadequate provision now will lead to the same 'catch 22' situation maybe 10 years down the line, which is remedial work to retrofit in better designs as requested. The answer will come back from TransportNI that it is too expensive to proceed and, of course, these things are best incorporated into new schemes. This is the opportunity to get it right.

I thank you for your time'.

Following the conclusion of the presentation made by Mr Hobbs, the Inspector had a query for Mr Spiers. Whilst the point concerning 'project creep' had been noted, could it be that TNI would carry out modifications as part of and at the limits of the Scheme, which would have to be undone when future plans were developed to make changes to those particular junctions? Could TNI anticipate

what was likely to happen, so that the junctions did not have to be torn apart, the road surfaces re-excavated and so forth?

Responding initially to the issue of the Brougham Street junction, Mr Spiers said that to move the cycle lane to the edge of the carriageway would mean the removal of the slip lane and that would severely impact on the operational capacity of the junction.

He added that the Scheme did not require any changes to the Brougham Street junction or its control systems, and the proposals from the Cycling Unit to seek to develop linkages back into the railway station and the cycling network through the Whitla Street underpass would incorporate any necessary changes to the junction.

The intention was to maintain the existing junction largely as it is and provide the single lane connection. Extensive discussions had taken place with Tony Russell, and other Sustrans representative on the proposals.

The Inspector said that it had occurred to him when Mr Hobbs was speaking, that when travelling in a northbound direction along York Street to the Brougham Street junction on a bicycle, you would be emerging from behind a bus stop and onto the lane on the carriageway and immediately encountering traffic turning left. Did that merging from two different directions not lead to a risk of accidents. Mr Hobbs added there may well be buses sitting at that bus stop, so traffic passing by those buses would not see the cyclists emerging.

Mr Spiers said he was content that the proposal meets current standards. Mr Megarry added that TNI had come a long distance, and he pointed out that in the original proposal there were extensive mandatory cycle lanes and some advisory lanes.

Referring to the point made by Mr Hobbs on light segregation, Mr Megarry said that this would be provided southbound. In relation to buses, the current LCDS specifically said in that situation a white line is all that is needed.

With reference to future plans outside the proposed scheme Mr Megarry commented that he imagined that should DRD, or the DRD Cycling Unit come forward with proposals for Brougham Street, there would be enough time to incorporate other provisions beyond the footprint of the current project into the Scheme.

The Assistant Inspector asked if the Department could give a commitment that this issue would be looked at, as the timescale was such that there was obviously scope to involve the Cycling Unit in looking beyond the scheme. He believed that it would be important that the matter was addressed, so that both would be delivered within the same timescale.

Mr Spiers confirmed that the Department would be commissioning studies to look at the extension of the cycling network to the railway station or to Whitla Street. In discussions with Sustrans the question had been raised as to whether Sustrans wanted to wait until the proposed YSI Scheme was finished before the additional work was carried out. Mr Spiers added that if it could be implemented earlier, that would be to everyone's benefit and the YSI Scheme could connect with it. The proposals were flexible enough to allow that to happen.

Mr Spiers concluded by saying that TNI did not have a blank canvas or a great deal of space to design a completely new network. They were severely constrained by building lines on the approaches to the bridge, which dictated a consistent level of provision right along York Street. There was little point in providing limited provision within the built environment area and then moving

out in a bubble over the York Street Bridge.

Mr McGuinness again invited Mr Clarke who was present to comment on the alternative scheme proposals which had been presented which could restrict the availability of York Street to cyclists. Mr Clarke again declined to comment on plans which he had not seen.

Inspectors' Comments (Jonathan Hobbs, NI Greenways)

The concerns of the Objector recorded above, the TNI responses and the detailed information presented and discussed at the Inquiry have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Jonathan Hobbs, NI Greenways)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

Assessment of The Comments

A total of 17 comments were received by the closing date of 10th March 2015.

A summary of each point contained within these observations is set out in bold typeface, followed immediately by the subsequent written Departmental response in full to each issue which was raised.

We have considered this evidence, together with the additional information provided during the three days of the Inquiry by individuals, their Representatives, the TNI Team and the Consultants (URS). We have also taken into account the evidence we obtained during our site visits which took place both before and after the Public Inquiry held at the Spires Centre.

At the end of the section devoted to each contributor and/or Agents are the 'Inspectors' Comments' and where appropriate, 'Inspectors' Recommendations'.

In those instances where we have considered an overall comment would be appropriate these will be found in Section 7, 'Inspectors' Considerations' and Section 8, 'Inspectors' Recommendations'.

In those instances where we make little or no comment, it may be assumed that we are in broad agreement with the evidence presented by the Department

4.3.1 Comment Number

COM01

Name

Wesley Johnston

Date submitted

28 January 2015

NIMVO plot number

N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

I'LL NOT BE IN BELFAST, BUT I'D LOVE TO SEE IT, THANK YOU.

I'VE BEEN LOOKING AT THE PROPOSED LANE ARRANGEMENTS AND IT'S A HUGE IMPROVEMENT ON THE STAGE 2 DESIGN. ALL THE MAIN POINTS OF CONCERN I HAD WITH THOSE, WHICH FOCUSED ON MERGE ISSUES, HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED IN THIS DESIGN. I'M VERY PLEASED.

TransportNI welcomes your comments in relation to the amendments to the layout of the Proposed Scheme following the completion of the Stage 2 Scheme Assessment process in 2012.

THE ONLY THING I'VE NOTICED SO FAR IS THAT THE SOUTHBOUND CYCLE LANE ON YORK STREET AS IT PASSES GALWAY HOUSE APPEARS TO BE SET UP SUCH THAT M2-BOUND TRAFFIC WILL TEND TO SWING LEFT ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE CYCLISTS AS THE CYCLISTS CONTINUE ONTO THE BUS LANE ON YORK STREET. TO ME THAT SEEMS LIKE A RECIPE FOR ACCIDENTS AND COULD SURELY BE IMPROVED. I DON'T THINK A GIVE-WAY FOR CYCLISTS WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE SOLUTION – HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO LOOK BEHIND YOU WHILE ON A BIKE? IT'S ACTUALLY VERY DIFFICULT, SO CYCLISTS WOULD BE FORCED TO COME TO A COMPLETE HALF AND THEN WAIT FOR ALL TRAFFIC TO PASS BEFORE THEY COULD CONTINUE. IN SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT THE CYCLE LANE ITSELF SEEMS POINTLESS, AS IT WOULD BE FAR MORE CONVENIENT AND

FASTER FOR CYCLISTS TO CYCLE IN THE GENERAL TRAFFIC LANE AS THAT WOULD ELIMINATE THE CONFLICT, AND I SUSPECT THAT THAT'S WHAT MOST WOULD DO IN PRACTICE AND THAT WOULDN'T BE GOOD FOR ANYONE.

Cycling Provision:

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry. We would thank-you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Wesley Johnston)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Wesley Johnston)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.3.2 Comment Number

COM02

Name

Denis McConnell

Date submitted..... 30 January 2015

NIMVO plot numberN/A

The comments from Mr McConnell were withdrawn prior to the start of the Inquiry

4.3.3 Comment Number

COM03A and B

NameBrian Gaffney, Savills (NI) Limited

Change of Name Mr Richard Agus, Director, MRA Partnership

Date submitted..... 12 February 2015

NIMVO plot number 41, 42, 43

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

ON BEHALF OF THE LANDLORD AT CITYSIDE RETAIL PARK, CORBO PROPERTIES LTD AND SAVILLS WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR THE PRESENTATION GIVEN IN RESPECT OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE PROJECT ON TUESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2015. IN GENERAL WE WELCOME THE PROPOSALS AND BELIEVE THEY WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE AREA.

TransportNI welcomes your general support of the Proposed Scheme and trust you received our letter dated 24 February 2015.

IN RESPECT OF THE SPECIFIC CHANGES TO OCCUR IN AND AROUND CITYSIDE WE NOTE THE PROPOSALS INCLUDE A RELOCATION OF THE CURRENT ACCESS / EGRESS FROM YORK STREET. KNOWING THE SITE AS WELL AS WE DO WE BELIEVE THAT ONCE THE MAIN WORKS TO THE ENTRANCE OFF YORK ST INTO CITYSIDE START IT WILL MOST PROBABLY CAUSE A BOTTLENECK TO OUR MAJOR ENTRANCE/EXIT POINT OF OUR PREMISES. THIS WILL IN TURN HAVE A KNOCK ON EFFECT AT OUR SECONDARY ENTRANCE/EXIT AT BROUGHAM STREET. IN AN EFFORT TO ALLEVIATE THIS CONGESTION IT IS PROPOSED THAT THE OLD ENTRANCE OFF NORTH QUEEN STREET BE RE-OPENED (ATTACHED ARE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ENTRANCE/EXIT POINT). THIS WILL ALLOW EASIER ACCESS/EGRESS TO THE SITE AND DIVERT TRAFFIC AWAY FROM THE MAIN WORKS AREA. OUR PRINCIPAL CONCERN HERE IS THE SMOOTH FLOW OF VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC AND AROUND THE SITE DURING THE WORKS. WE WOULD WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS TO THE ABOVE PROPOSAL AND IN THE MEANTIME WOULD REQUEST THAT A COPY OF THE AERIAL DVD SHOWN AT THE PRESENTATION BE SENT TO THE CENTRE OPERATIONS MANAGER AT CITYSIDE.

North Queen Street access

As stated in our letter of 24 February 2015, in regard to the re-opening of the North Queen Street entrance, either during construction or on a permanent basis, there may well be merit in this proposal. If there are no planning issues, in regard to the re-opening of this entrance, TransportNI would be content to review this part of the accommodation works which will be discussed with you and your client prior to the commencement of the Proposed Scheme.

A Temporary Traffic Management Strategy for the construction period of the entire scheme is currently being developed by TransportNI.

We trust your Operations Manager received a copy of the DVD issued to him.

Comment Number COM03B

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

ADDITIONALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO RAISE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION ON BEHALF OF MY CLIENT.

HOW WILL TRANSPORT NI ENSURE THAT BUSINESSES IN THE VICINITY OF THE NEW INTERCHANGE ARE NOT NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED WORKS?

IT IS OF PARAMOUNT PERFORMANCE TO OUR OCCUPIERS (TENANTS) THAT THEIR TRADE REMAINS UNDISTURBED DURING THE WORKS. AS WE ARE A RETAIL AND LEISURE DESTINATION THE ABILITY OF OUR OCCUPIERS TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS DEPENDS ON THEIR CUSTOMERS ACCESSING THE SCHEME. ANY BARRIER OR DELAYS TO ACCESS WILL HAVE A DEMONSTRABLE EFFECT ON THEIR BUSINESSES. ADDITIONALLY IF THE OCCUPIERS TURNOVER REDUCES AS A RESULT OF THE BARRIERS AND DELAYS TO ACCESS THEN IT HAMPERS THEIR ABILITY TO PAY RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE. THIS IN TURN COULD LEAD TO VACANCIES AND REDUCED INCOME FOR THE OWNERS. IN TURN THIS MAY LEAD TO A REDUCTION IN VALUE OF SCHEME.

CLEARLY THIS IS A MATTER THAT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED SATISFACTORILY TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF LOCAL BUSINESSES.

I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD CONFIRM RECEIPT OF THIS EMAIL AND I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR RESPONSE.

Access during Construction

TransportNI has considered the impacts during construction on adjacent businesses and residents and would ensure that access to all properties is maintained for the duration of the works.

A Temporary Traffic Management Strategy for the construction period is currently being developed by TransportNI and we would like to discuss your concerns and proposals in relation to your access during the works as the detailed design progresses.

Effect on Businesses

Where applicable, compensation would be offered in accordance with the provisions of the relevant legislation (Land Acquisition and Compensation (NI) Order 1973).

Part II of the Land Acquisition and Compensation (NI) Order 1973 includes a right to compensation for reduction in value caused by the use of public works.

It is understood that Mr Richard Agus, a Director of MRA Partnership Limited took over responsibility before the start of the Inquiry from Mr Brian Gaffney for progressing the concerns of Cityside Retail and Leisure Park.

Mr Agus attended the Inquiry and read a prepared statement on the afternoon of Day 1. This statement is set out below in full.

‘Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Richard Agus, MBA, MEng, CEng, MICE on behalf of Cityside Retail Park. I am a director of MRA Partnership Limited, an independent transport consultancy and I have 20 years’ experience.

I have been engaged by Cityside Retail and Leisure Park to review the proposed road improvements at York Street Interchange, and assess the potential consequences on access and parking at Cityside Retail Park.

At the outset, Cityside Retail Park support the proposals in principle, on the understanding that it will improve connectivity between the Belfast City Centre and their site at York Street by removing a heavy traffic barrier. However, a review of the information provided to date indicates that the proposals will affect customer access to this site, and further information and clarification is sought. It is anticipated further surveys and drawing amendments will be required to address these concerns.

These concerns were summarised within a preliminary report, together with suggested mitigation. This was submitted at the pre-inquiry meeting to aid further discussion with Transport NI in an attempt to narrow the issues prior to the Inquiry commencing in November. It is noted that drawing revisions subsequently undertaken have begun to mitigate against some of these concerns, but there remains significant issues with the proposed layout amendments which will be detrimental to the future viability of Cityside.

A meeting is scheduled for 30 October with TNI representatives, and this may narrow the issues prior to the Inquiry.

Existing Conditions

Cityside Retail and Leisure Park has expanded on its York Street site since the opening of Yorkgate Shopping Centre in 1991. It now contains a foodstore, multiple non-food and mixed retailing units, restaurants, bingo halls and a multi-plex cinema.

Access to the site is currently obtained via York Street and Brougham Street. The centre currently has approximately 900 parking spaces, required to be provided by the Department of the Environment as a result of previous and on-going expansion. The most sought after parking area is adjacent to York Street.

Cityside is readily accessible for customers approaching along the M2, M3 and A12 (Westlink), enabling it to be easily accessed by car from throughout Belfast and Newtownabbey. In addition, it is accessible by car and on foot from Belfast City Centre, via York Street. Public Inquiry Statement York Street Interchange Cityside Retail Park.

Primary concerns with Proposed York Street Interchange

The proposed modifications at York Street have the potential to be very damaging to the trade at this existing centre if the existing good access and parking is compromised.

Concern 1 – Loss of convenient access from the main road network

The proposed modifications to the road layout will isolate Cityside from customers approaching on the M2, and leaving towards the Westlink. This prevents passing trade and will deter existing customers. Whereas at present the route for M2 customers is a 250m drive from Great George Street, in the future these customers will need to leave the M2 at the previous junction (Duncrue), and travel 1km along an indirect network using unfamiliar roads. Whereas at present these customers use the York Street access, in future this will no longer be possible.

For customer leaving towards the Westlink, currently they use Dock Street, Nelson Street and George Street, a journey of circa 900m. In the future there will be no access to the Westlink from this route. Customers seeking the Westlink will have to seek an alternative route via North Queen Street and Clifton Street, a journey approaching 1.5km.

This major issue will be compounded if, during the construction stage, the access routes for customers vary from phase to phase.

As well as customers, these changes will affect deliveries approaching the site from the M2, which includes HGVs arriving from two main docks in Northern Ireland (Stena Belfast, and Larne)

Mitigation sought

To re-educate customers and delivery drivers, signage will be required from the M2 (at Duncrue Street) along the new route to Cityside, and to the Westlink. Ideally the new route can be established as soon as the old route is closed, and that this new route remains accessible so that the approach routes will be consistent throughout the construction period and onwards.

Utilising this methodology, customers and deliveries will become familiar with the new routes, and these will remain the new routes post construction. It is recognised that whilst desirable, such signage could not remain in place on a permanent basis, and would be removed after a fixed period of time (for example, 12 months after completion of the scheme).

By signing Cityside customers along the new route (available from Phase 5), the volume of traffic going through the main works area will reduce, easing the traffic

management through the main works. Public Inquiry Statement York Street Interchange Cityside Retail Park

Concern 2 – Access interrupted from Belfast City Centre.

The construction of new underpasses and junctions will inevitably affect vehicle and pedestrian movements along York Street, and therefore affect the flow of customers between Belfast City Centre and Cityside. Whilst drivers are often accommodated, Cityside is concerned this area will become even more congested in the short term, deterring customers.

Cityside is further concerned that pedestrian connectivity will be lost as footways are removed/replaced. Cityside attracts retail and leisure trade from students and staff at the University of Ulster campus in Belfast. This footway linkage will be disrupted just as this campus expands, harming the opportunity for this trade to take place.

It is noted in Phase 9 that the York Street access will be closed while the new access is constructed (drawing YSI-URS-XX-XX-DR-RE-TM009). This will deter customers, and there is no indication the Brougham Street access has adequate capacity to accommodate all the traffic.

Mitigation sought

To ease vehicular linkage with the city centre, Cityside would facilitate an access from North Queen Street. Assuming signage would direct customers this route, this will reduce the traffic flow through the construction areas, easing congestion as well as maintaining access to Cityside whilst the works are ongoing. This route would help re-direct Westlink-bound traffic via Clifton Street.

To maintain good pedestrian activity, Cityside need a signed, surfaced pedestrian route along York Street to be maintained at all times, with appropriate, safe crossing points.

It is not acceptable for the York Street access to be closed in Phase 9 altogether without mitigation, such as the North Queen Street access. This closure should take place during overnight periods only, when access is not required for customers.

Concern 3 - Access from York Street.

The York Street access is the main access to the site for customers approaching from M2, M3, Westlink and the city centre, and as noted above, alterations to the road layout will result in the loss of good access from the M2. The York Street access is also being changed from a priority junction facilitating left-in/left-out access to a signal controlled access. Whilst this change is acceptable in principle, there is a lack of detail regarding the junction layout, the capacity, and how this will affect the efficient, internal operations of Cityside. Public Inquiry Statement York Street Interchange Cityside Retail Park.

The proposed layout was indicated on Junction 6 drawing GE306. This showed a single exit lane coming from the site, stopping up existing parking circulation routes within the site. The access led directly into existing parking areas which would have needed removed.

At the Pre-Inquiry meeting these car park works were dismissed by Transport NI as “accommodation works”. RSPPG S028 identifies “Accommodation works can comprise such things as the provision of fences (temporary or permanent), hedges, walls, gates and the restoring of access to the road on a new or altered boundary.” There is no reference to car parking within RSPPG S028, and such works appear to be replacing existing site features, such as boundaries and access. The proposed works will remove car parking from the site, significantly alter the layout of the parking on the site and therefore cannot be dismissed as accommodation works.

Even if they were accommodation works, there is no forum other than this Inquiry whereby these amendments necessary to facilitate the scheme can be discussed.

We are pleased to note that Transport NI have acknowledged these concerns, and have amended the proposed access arrangements to “minimise works to car park (and loss of spaces) in Cityside Retail Park” (reference - drawing TNI_YSI-URS-ENM-ZZ-DR-HY-000007).

Whilst the original layout was totally infeasible, the new layout is dangerous and will be unworkable, resulting in congestion within the car park (and therefore tailing back on to the public road) and will discourage customers from coming to Cityside.

The revised layout restores the separate entrance and exit arrangements at the existing car park, signalling the exit. There are 5 issues with the revised layout, articulated in detail below:

1. The entering traffic is being directed up a one way aisle the wrong way.
2. Within approximately 20m of leaving York Street, entering vehicles will be obstructed by car trying to enter and leave parking stalls. This manoeuvring will prevent following vehicles from entering the site, resulting in a queue of vehicles tailing back on to York Street. The traffic data provided shows 3-4 vehicles per minute will need to pass along this route, leaving limited time for manoeuvring in and out of the 32 spaces located on this first aisle. At busy periods, the arriving traffic will exceed this, at least one vehicle every 10 seconds.
3. This first aisle directs all vehicles past the main entrance of Cityside. This is the location where the maximum volume of pedestrians will be located. Good parking practice has car parks filling from the rear not the front, to minimise the number of vehicles at the main store entrance. The new layout ignores best practice, and poses a threat to the safety of vulnerable road users.
4. The proposed layout will turn the 2nd aisle into a cul-de-sac serving 38 spaces. It is recommended cul-de sacs should be no more than 3 or 4 stalls. The consequence will be vehicles reversing back along this aisle, toward the main entrance where all the arriving vehicles and customers converge.
5. The vehicles seeking to exit the site will face congestion, because there is insufficient storage for cars to wait at the proposed traffic signals. The traffic data provided shows 119 vehicles seeking to leave this car park. This number could increase as the M2 will now be accessible. Best practice suggests designing a car park so that a quarter of the capacity can exit in 15 minutes (Car Park Designers' Handbook, ICE). Cityside has two accesses, and York Street is the less busy access during the PM peak. Based on the portions provided, York Street is favoured by 20% of users, and this equates to 6 vehicles every 2 minutes, based on a 900 space car park. This seems a reasonable figure for a busy period given the weekday PM peak is 4 vehicles every two minutes (2 minutes is the maximum cycle time the proposed signals will have).

The revised plans show a waiting area for 1 vehicle at the stop line, before conflict with movements in and out of aisles and parking stalls will begin to interfere with the movement of traffic through these proposed signals. This conflict will lead to congestion which leads to frustrations which at best deters custom and at worst leads to collisions and injuries.

To accommodate 6 vehicles, an unhindered exit lane of at least 36m will be required.

Mitigation sought

The proposed signal control access will greatly impact on the size and operation of the car park. This proposed arrangement can only be accommodated through cooperation of Cityside or vesting of additional lands.

That Transport NI have already altered plans to start to address these issues is welcomed, and it demonstrates a) it is a problem and b) their willingness to resolve it.

Now that it has been identified and accepted that the proposed access arrangements will affect the size and operation of their car park it will be acceptable to Cityside that detailed designs and signalling arrangements, and consequential compensation can be agreed in the future outside of this public inquiry. Public Inquiry Statement York Street Interchange Cityside Retail Park

Concern 4 - Loss of parking

The proposed access from York Street will be detrimental to the primary parking area of Cityside. The revised plans already result in the loss of spaces. As identified above, the car parking layout needs to change further to be safe and effective, and this will result in the loss of further parking.

This is the prime area of parking at Cityside, and any reduction of spaces would be detrimental to the attractiveness of the retail and leisure park. There is no justification provided supporting the removal of these spaces, which Cityside have had to provide to satisfy planning conditions. Indeed, the removal of these spaces would put Cityside in breach of their planning conditions.

Mitigation sought

Detailed plans of the revised parking arrangements at Cityside are required, showing how the loss of prime parking will be minimised. Confirmation that such a reduction will be acceptable to the local planning authority will be required. This loss of parking will need to be acceptable by Cityside, and appropriate compensation will be required.

Conclusion

This statement has identified four areas of concern on behalf of Cityside Retail and Leisure Park, whose operations will be detrimentally affected by the proposals.

Cityside are willing to facilitate a third access (North Queen Street) to help alleviate access and congestion issues which will arise during the construction process. This offer is not indicated on the traffic management drawings, which instead shows the York Street access being closed during Phase 9. This closure is unacceptable except at times when Cityside is closed.

Cityside will require vehicular and pedestrian access to their site throughout the construction programme, including signage to Cityside from the M2, and from Cityside to the Westlink, since the road improvements prevent the existing routes being used. Pedestrian routes are also important, and require to be signed and surfaced.

The alternative amendments proposed to the York Street access arrangements and parking layout are welcomed insofar as they acknowledge this is an important issue previously ignored. The revised layout remains unsafe and impracticable. Cityside are willing to agree layout amendments with Transport NI in due course, subject to planning issues and compensation being resolved.

Responding to a question from the Inspector at the Inquiry concerning the outcome of recent discussions between Mr Agus and TNI, Mr Spires said that the accuracy of the minutes of a recent meeting had still to be confirmed.

He added that the issues which had been raised were essentially accommodation works and TNI was working to resolve the problems as best they can. Furthermore, if there was to be a loss of car parking space, that would be a matter for compensation.

With reference to opening a second access on to North Queen Street, Mr Spiers confirmed that this would be investigated and provided it was satisfactory in all respects to TNI, the PSNI and other appropriate Authorities, he did not see any difficulty. However, a firm guarantee could not be given at this time.

Turning to signage, Mr Spiers confirmed that TNI would provide temporary signs to direct people from the strategic road network to York Street during the construction phase. As it was policy not to sign any retail developments, it would not be possible to provide specific directions to Cityside Retail Park.

Whilst there was still some way to go, Mr Spiers was of the opinion that all the issues raised by Mr Agus could in some way be resolved to meet the needs of both parties.

In response to a further question from the Inspector, Mr Spiers confirmed that TNI did not intend to discuss detailed accommodation works with any landowners at this stage in the Scheme implementation process.

Mr Agus expressed the opinion that the Inquiry was the forum where these matters were considered. The issues needed to be discussed now, as they were not simple concerns such as the provision of a new drive or fence. He said that the Issues facing Cityside were more serious in that parking spaces were to be removed and access arrangements changed. Both of these had been essential requirements identified by another Government Department in the past.

Furthermore, Mr Agus pointed out that permanent signs had been erected by TNI to direct people to the Applegreen site. If permanent signage could be provided at this location, then he suggested that temporary signs could be provided for Cityside to enable their customers to become familiar with the new routes. Should a junction be missed they might have to go through the construction site twice and never come back.

Mr Spiers again confirmed that DRD would be content to erect signs for York Street but he would not make a commitment to identify a particular retail outlet. He added that Applegreen was a motorway service area where different guidance on signage was applied.

Responding to questions from Mr McGuinness, Mr Agus confirmed that it was important to maintain pedestrian access along York Street and that the loss of direct access onto the M2 would have adverse consequences. Mr Agus was unable to comment on the implications of the Vector alternative Scheme (OBJ07) as he had not had time to consider their submission in sufficient detail.

The most important point from the Cityside perspective was that people should be able to get to their site, even if the journey time was to be longer.

Inspectors' Comments Richard Agus, Director, MRA Partnership

It is understood and accepted that discussions to finalise accommodation works associated with roads schemes normally occur at an advanced stage, when the project has moved to the point where detailed construction planning is taking place.

However, in the case of Cityside Retail Park the issues are more complex, in that the potential reduction in parking spaces and the temporary closure of an access to the site could lead to the situation where Cityside could find itself in breach of previously imposed mandatory requirements defined by other Government Agencies, through no fault of its own.

In this situation, it is believed that discussions should continue at this time with the objective of resolving the outstanding issues. However, Mr Agus should understand that detailed construction planning might reveal issues which are not apparent at this

time and this could mean further changes to the proposals at some stage in the future.

Whilst Mr Spiers said he was not in a position to give a commitment to provide temporary signage to the Cityside Retail Park during the construction phase of the Scheme, the request for this to be provided appears to have merit.

Inspectors' Recommendations Richard Agus, Director, MRA Partnership

- Discussion between Mr Agus, TNI and other interested parties to continue with the aim of clarifying and resolving the issues surrounding the loss of car park spaces and the need to create an access onto North Queen Street.
- Discussions to continue between Mr Agus and TNI to clarify and resolve the issue of access to York Street being closed during phase 9 of the scheme.
- TNI to give further sympathetic consideration to providing temporary signage to Cityside Retail Park from both the Strategic Road Network and for pedestrians during the construction phase of the scheme

4.3.4.. Comment Number COM04

Name Andrew Grieve, DRD Cycling Unit

Date submitted..... 07 May 2015

NIMVO plot number N/A

The comments from Mr Grieve were withdrawn prior to the start of the Inquiry

4.3.5 Comment Number COM05

Name Grace McLoughlin (John Thompson & Sons Ltd)

Date submitted..... 05 March 2015

NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

ON BEHALF OF JOHN THOMPSON & SONS LTD (35-39 YORK ROAD, BELFAST BT15 3GW) I WRITE TO REQUEST THAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BE PRESENTED WITH REGARDS TO THE AIR QUALITY IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE SCHEME. IT IS NOTED WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT, THAT THE SCHEME IS DESCRIBED AS HAVING NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON EITHER LOCAL OR REGIONAL AIR QUALITY. HOWEVER, IT IS ALSO NOTED THAT THE SCHEME WILL RESULT IN LOCALISED CHANGES IN EMISSIONS AND IN THE YEAR OF OPENING & DESIGN YEAR, NITROGEN DIOXIDE IS PREDICTED TO BE BELOW NATIONAL AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVE VALUES. BOTH THE LOCALISED CHANGE & PREDICTED NOX LEVELS ARE OF INTEREST TO

JOHN THOMPSON & SONS & WE REQUEST THAT FURTHER INFORMATION BE MADE AVAILABLE. SPECIFICALLY, DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCALISED CHANGES IN TERMS OF RECEPTORS IN THE VICINITY OF THE SCHEME (AND IN TURN OUR FACILITY) E.G. IS REDISTRIBUTION OF NOX PROJECTED TO OCCUR & WHAT ARE THE PREDICTED CONCENTRATIONS AT CURRENT RECEPTORS. ADDITIONALLY, NUMERICAL VALUES FOR CHANGES IN NOX FOR THE SCHEME ARE REQUESTED IN ORDER THAT WE MAY FULLY UNDERSTAND THE SCHEME AIR QUALITY BENEFIT. SHOULD FURTHER CLARIFICATION ON OUR REQUEST BE REQUIRED, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT ME.

Air Quality information request

notes your email request of 05 March 2015 for additional air quality information and trust that the email of 09 March 2015 to you addressed your concerns and provided the relevant links and references to specific sections of the Environmental Statement (ES).

The site of John Thompson & Sons Ltd. (35-39 York Road, Belfast) lies some distance beyond the northern boundary of the study area for the assessment of impacts on local air quality. Given the magnitude of impacts reported in the ES, it is unlikely that there would be any change in measureable concentrations of NO_x or nitrogen dioxide at the facility as a direct impact of the Proposed Scheme. We would thank-you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Grace McLoughlin John Thompson & Sons Ltd)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

4.3.6 Comment Number	COM06
Name	Dr Kirstin Lemon, GSNI
Date submitted.....	05 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

AS PART OF THE FORMAL CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE, THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF NORTHERN IRELAND HAS CONSIDERED THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT. ON PAGE VIII UNDER THE GEOLOGY AND SOILS SECTIONS IT STATES : 'FROM A GEOLOGY AND SOILS PERSPECTIVE, THERE WOULD BE RELATIVELY FEW KEY ISSUES'.

WE WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT THAT THE AREA FOR THE PROPOSED YORK STREET LNTERCHANGE IS UNDERLAIN BY A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF ESTUARINE ALLUVIUM, ALSO KNOWN AS 'SLEECH'. THIS VERY LOOSE AND VERY SOFT GROUND SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION PRIOR TO ANY DEVELOPMENT WORK.

Geology & Soils

TransportNI notes your email of 05 March 2015 with attached letter.

TransportNI would highlight that a full Geology & Soils assessment has been undertaken for the Proposed Scheme and reported in Chapter 17 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement (ES), which gives a more comprehensive technical assessment than the Non-Technical Summary referred to above.

In particular, the assessment considered the solid and drift geology within the study area, and indeed the fact that the area is largely underlain by silex (sub-section 17.5.2). Accordingly, the ground conditions likely to be encountered have been factored into the design of the Proposed Scheme.

OTHER FACTORS TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION WOULD INCLUDE THE POTENTIAL FOR CONTAMINATION OF THE SHERWOOD SANDSTONE BEDROCK AQUIFER THAT UNDERLIES THE 'SILEX'.

Contamination

The issue of potential contamination has also been considered and assessed in relation to the scheme, and reported in sub-sections 17.5.7 and 17.6.1.5 in Volume 1 of the ES.

Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 17.7 of the ES.

Moreover, a Ground Investigation Report (June 2015) has been prepared, which deals in detail with contamination issues. A copy can be provided on request.

SHOULD YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION, THEN DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT WILLIAM SMYTH AT THIS ADDRESS WHO WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE SITE OF THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Dr Kirstin Lemon, GSNI)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

4.3.7 Comment Number COM07
Name John Ford, NIEA - Natural Environment Division
Date submitted 05 March 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

I REFER TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT (ES) WHICH WAS RECEIVED IN THIS OFFICE ON 28 JANUARY 2015.

Having considered the content of the Environmental Impact Assessment consultation submitted by URS in support of this proposal, NIEA would make the following comments.

We are pleased to note from submitted documents the proposed mitigation for bats and breeding birds on the development site and are of the opinion that should these be followed, the site may become of greater value for biodiversity.

Bat and breeding bird mitigation

TransportNI welcomes your support of the proposed mitigation measures in relation to bats and breeding birds, as noted in sub-section 10.7.6 and 10.7.8 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement (ES).

WE REMIND TRANSPORT NI THAT UNDER ARTICLE 1 OF THE WILDLIFE AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2011 IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY PUBLIC BODY, IN EXERCISING ANY FUNCTIONS, TO FURTHER THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY SO FAR AS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PROPER EXERCISE OF THOSE FUNCTIONS.

Conserving biodiversity includes:

IN RELATION TO ANY SPECIES OF FLORA OR FAUNA, RESTORING OR ENHANCING A POPULATION OF THAT SPECIES;

IN RELATION TO ANY TYPE OF HABITAT, RESTORING OR ENHANCING THE HABITAT.

Conservation of biodiversity

TransportNI confirms that it is aware of its duty to further the conservation of biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of Article 1 of The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, as noted in sub-section 10.4 in Volume 1 of the ES.

WE NOTE THAT TWO STANDS OF JAPANESE KNOTWEED (*FALLOPIA JAPONICA*) WERE DISCOVERED ON THE DEVELOPMENT SITE. WE REMIND THE APPLICANT OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY UNDER ARTICLE 15 OF THE WILDLIFE (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985 (AS AMENDED) UNDER WHICH IT IS AN OFFENCE TO PLANT OR OTHERWISE CAUSE TO GROW IN THE WILD ANY PLANT INCLUDED UNDER PART II OF SCHEDULE 9 OF THE ORDER, WHICH INCLUDES JAPANESE KNOTWEED. THIS HIGHLY INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES HAS BEEN RECORDED ON SITE AND CONTROL MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT ANY WORKS DO NOT CAUSE IT TO SPREAD EITHER ON OR OFF THE SITE. WE WOULD EXPECT BEST PRACTICE TO BE FOLLOWED AT ALL TIMES WHEN DEALING WITH JAPANESE KNOTWEED.

Invasive species

TransportNI confirms that it is aware of its responsibility under Article 15 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended) in relation to invasive species, as noted in sub-section 10.5.2.2 in Volume 1 of the ES. In this regard, appropriate mitigation measures are proposed to deal with the Japanese knotweed issue, as noted in sub-section 10.7.5 in Volume 1 of the ES.

THE SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS HAVE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING PERCEIVED RISKS AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

THE DRAINAGE VELOCITY OF STORM WATER FROM THE SCHEME ENTERING BELFAST HARBOUR HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DISTURB AND RE-SUSPEND CONTAMINANTS FROM PERVIOUS INDUSTRIALLY CONTAMINATED LANDS ON THE BED OF BELFAST HARBOUR;

DISTURBANCE OF CONTAMINATED GROUND/CONTAMINATED GROUNDWATER WITHIN THE CONSTRUCTION FOOTPRINT HAS POTENTIAL TO INDIRECTLY INTRODUCE THE CONTAMINANTS TO BELFAST LOUGH SPA/BELFAST LOUGH OPEN WATER SPA VIA NEW PATHWAYS OR GROUNDWATER MOBILISATION;

THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME IN-COMBINATION TO OTHER PLANS OR PROJECTS IN THE AREA.

THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL ON THE NATURA 2000 SITES HAS BEEN ASSESSED AND IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT ADHERENCE TO A SERIES OF STRICT PROTOCOLS AND MITIGATION MEASURES SHOULD ALLEVIATE ANY ADVERSE IMPACT. MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDE ADHERENCE TO RELEVANT PPG'S AND ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION AS WELL AS SPECIFIC MEASURES SUCH AS SEDIMENT TRAPS, EMERGENCY POLLUTION CONTROL CUT-OFF VALVES, BUNDING AND UTILISING THE EXISTING DRAINAGE SYSTEM.

NIEA IS CONTENT THAT URS ON BEHALF OF TRANSPORT NI HAVE IDENTIFIED THE POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS ON BOTH BELFAST LOUGH SPA & BELFAST LOUGH OPEN WATER SPA FROM THIS PROPOSAL AND PRESENTED APPROPRIATE MITIGATION MEASURES. DUE TO THE SCALE AND NATURE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT A CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (CEMP) SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY THE APPOINTED CONTRACTOR TO ENSURE THEY ARE AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL RISKS AT EACH STAGE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND THE MITIGATION MEASURES TO BE EMPLOYED TO ENSURE THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ON THE DESIGNATED SITES FROM THIS PROPOSAL.

Natura 2000 sites

TransportNI confirms that it has fully considered the potential impacts and perceived risks on the Natura 2000 sites in proximity to the scheme, in both the ES and the Statement to Inform the Appropriate Assessment, and has identified appropriate mitigation measures, which would be implemented as part of the construction contract.

Construction Environmental Management Plan

TransportNI confirms that construction-related impacts and overall buildability issues are given very careful consideration by TransportNI. Section 4.7 in Volume 1 of the ES details the proposed construction sequence and construction programme. Construction-related impacts are also assessed and mitigation proposed in each of the technical chapters (Chapters 8 to 17) in Volume 1 of the ES. Moreover, in line with the guidance contained within Interim Advice Note 183/14, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has been prepared for the Proposed Scheme and is contained within Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the ES. The EMP forms an outline plan and is closely aligned with the design and assessment process contained within Part II of the ES (Chapters 8 to 17). The EMP would be further refined and expanded upon by the appointed Contractor into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as more information becomes available and there is more certainty in terms of the proposed layout, construction methods, programme, and the likely environmental effects.

TransportNI confirms that the CEMP would be submitted to Natural Environment Division by the appointed contractor.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (John Ford, NIEA – Natural Environment Division)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

4.3.8 Comment Number COM08
Name Damian Campbell, DOE - Marine Division
Date submitted..... 04 March 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

THE DOE MARINE DIVISION HAS CONSIDERED THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT PROVIDED TO THIS OFFICE ON 27TH JANUARY 2015 RELATING TO THE PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE THE YORK STREET ROAD JUNCTION, BELFAST.

FOLLOWING CORRESPONDENCE WITH URS (VARIOUS IN 2014), IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY OF THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE CARRIED OUT BELOW THE HWMST MARK OF NEARBY BELFAST LOUGH; THEREFORE NOT REQUIRING A MARINE CONSTRUCTION LICENCE UNDER THE MARINE AND COASTAL ACCESS ACT 2009. HOWEVER IF THERE ARE ANY UPDATED PLANS WHICH REQUIRE WORKS AT THE WATER EDGE BELOW THE HWMST MARK, PLEASE CONTACT US TO ENSURE ANY MARINE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS ARE MET. ANY FURTHER OUTFALL PIPE EFFECTS SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE ES.

WE ARE CONTENT THAT ALL THE RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH MARINE LICENSING HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED IN THE CURRENT ES AND ANY DRAINAGE AND POTENTIAL POLLUTION ISSUES IN BELFAST LOUGH ARE BEING ADDRESSED THROUGH THE NIEA CONSENTS TEAM.

DOE MARINE DIVISION HAS NO OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSAL.

Marine Issues

TransportNI notes your letter of 04 March 2015.

TransportNI confirms that all marine-related aspects have been assessed within the Road Drainage & Water Environment chapter (Chapter 16) in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement, and that should any drainage design amendments be necessary as the detailed design progresses, we would be in consultation with you again.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Damian Campbell, DOE - Marine Division)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

4.3.9 Comment NumberCOM09
NameDr Barry McAuley, DOE – Air and Environmental Quality Unit
Date submitted..... 09 March 2015
NIMVO plot numberN/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

I AM WRITING IN RESPONSE TO THE LETTER OF 27 JANUARY 2015 FROM ROADS SERVICE EASTERN DIVISION, REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT (ES) WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

I AM HAPPY TO SEE THAT THE CONSULTANTS WHO HAVE PREPARED THE ES HAVE ENGAGED WITH BELFAST CITY COUNCIL, AND TAKEN ACCOUNT OF THE COUNCIL'S REVIEWS AND ASSESSMENTS OF AIR QUALITY.

I NOTE THAT IT IS PREDICTED THAT LEVELS OF AIR POLLUTANTS (PM₁₀ AND NO₂) AT SENSITIVE RECEPTORS ARE PREDICTED TO BE BELOW NATIONAL AIR QUALITY STANDARDS IN OPENING YEAR (2021) AND DESIGN YEAR (2035) SCENARIOS, AND THAT CHANGES IN CONCENTRATIONS OF POLLUTANTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE IN GENERAL NEGLIGIBLE, AND WHERE CHANGES ARE SIGNIFICANT, THAT LEVELS WOULD NEVERTHELESS BE BELOW NATIONAL AIR QUALITY STANDARDS (P158-159).

HOWEVER, AS I SET OUT IN MY ADVICE OF 24TH MARCH 2014, LEVELS OF NO₂ ALONG THE WESTLINK ARE CURRENTLY IN BREACH OF REQUIREMENTS SET OUT IN DIRECTIVE 2008/50/EC. I WOULD ENCOURAGE THE CONSULTANTS WHO HAVE PREPARED THE ES TO GIVE SOME INDICATION OF THE PREDICTED EFFECTS ON CONCENTRATIONS OF NO₂ ALONG THE A12, AND OTHER NEIGHBOURING ROADS, NOT NECESSARILY JUST WHERE THERE IS RELEVANT EXPOSURE IN THE VICINITY OF THE INTERCHANGE (AN INDICATIVE ASSESSMENT MAY SUFFICE). FOR EXAMPLE, THE AQMA IN FIGURE 8.1 EXTENDS BEYOND THE GENERAL VICINITY OF THE AREA OF MAPPED RECEPTORS. AGAIN, BELFAST CITY COUNCIL MAY BE ABLE TO ADVISE IN THIS REGARD.

Air Quality

TransportNI notes the various comments made in relation to the findings of the Air Quality assessment contained within the Environmental Statement.

In terms of the predicted effects on NO₂ concentrations further south along the A12 Westlink AQMA and neighbouring roads, TransportNI would advise that such information (if available) can be useful for the wider issue of local air quality management, but is not a requirement of the assessment guidance that applies to the Proposed Scheme. The air quality assessment reported in Chapter 8 of the ES has made full use of the spatial extent of the traffic model which has been defined on the basis of where there is likely to be significant changes in traffic due to implementation of the Proposed Scheme itself.

The values reported in the ES indicate that there is no measureable change in air pollutant concentrations at receptors along the A12 Westlink at locations furthest from the Proposed Scheme. The scale of the impacts is likely to be similar at locations further along the A12 Westlink, where similar traffic conditions are experienced.

WITH REGARD TO NOISE, I WOULD ADVISE THAT ANY RELEVANT NOISE ACTION PLANS (PREPARED IN FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE DIRECTIVE – 2002/49/EC) WHICH HAVE BEEN PREPARED (OR WILL BE PREPARED) WILL HAVE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE PROPOSED INTERCHANGE, AS NECESSARY.

Noise

TransportNI notes your comments in relation to noise. The END Round 2 strategic noise mapping was completed in 2012 and the Round 2 Noise Action Plan for Roads was issued in 2013 (Department for Regional Development – Roads – Environmental Noise Directive Round 2 – Noise Action Plan 2013-2018, document reference CO401053/RNAP).

The Noise Action Plan describes how the Department for Regional Development (DRD), in conjunction with the Department of the Environment (DOE), proposes to deliver their obligations under the European Directive for Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise 2002/49/EC. The Noise Action Plan deals with noise from both Major Roads and All Roads within agglomerations of greater than 100,000 inhabitants.

The Noise Action Plan identifies Candidate Noise Management Areas (CNMAs). Some or all of these will eventually be confirmed as Noise Management Areas (NMAs).

TransportNI confirms it is aware that the Noise Action Plan identifies one CNMA on the Proposed Scheme. This is the area of Little Georges Street.

With the Proposed Scheme in operation, noise levels to properties in Little Georges Street are predicted to decrease by approximately 3 to 7 dB (additional noise barriers are specified in this location), as shown on Figures 13.3 and 13.4 in Volume 3 of the ES. Hence, the Proposed Scheme addresses the noise issue for this CNMA, as required by the Noise Action Plan.

The END Round 3 strategic noise mapping will be carried out in 2017 / 2018. Based on the current programme, the Proposed Scheme would be in the early stages of construction. How the Proposed Scheme is to be catered for in the Round 3 mapping and subsequent action plans will be a decision for DRD and DOE in due course.

FOR INFORMATION, ALL HISTORIC AIR QUALITY DATA COLLECTED ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND NETWORK CAN BE FOUND AT THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE: WWW.AIRQUALITYNI.CO.UK

Noise maps are available from the Department's website at: www.noiseni.co.uk

If I can be of any further assistance, do not hesitate to contact me.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Dr Barry McAuley, DOE – Air and Environmental Quality Unit)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

4.3.10 Comment Number	COM10
Name	Bruce Harper
Date submitted.....	09 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

I AM A CIVIL ENGINEER BSC (ING) MSC MEI, RESIDENT IN EAST BELFAST WHO DRIVES CIRCA 20,000 MILES PER YEAR PRIMARILY TO TRAVEL TO LIMERICK. I NOTE THE NEED FOR THIS UPGRADE AND AGREE *IN PRINCIPLE* TO THE PROJECT.

I HAVE HOWEVER MAJOR CONCERNS IN RELATION TO YORK STREET, IN PARTICULAR THE PROVISION FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS. THIS IS NOT A MOTORWAY BUT A CITY STREET AND THIS NEEDS TO BE GIVEN A SUFFICIENT WEIGHT.

THE INFLUX OF STUDENTS TO THIS AREA AS A RESULT OF UNIVERSITY ULSTER MOVE AND THE ASSOCIATED REGENERATION OF THIS AREA OF THE CITY MUST NOT BE COMPROMISED BY AN INADEQUATE DESIGN.

IN PARTICULAR THE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE PROVISION BETWEEN THE UU AND THE CINEMA AT CITYSIDE IS BELOW PAR.

THE MINISTER HAS INDICATED THAT BELFAST IS TO BECOME A LEADING CITY FOR CYCLING. I BELIEVE THAT THE DESIGN OF THE NON-MOTORWAY CITY STREETS ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN ARE VERY DATED AND DO NOT CONSTITUTE BEST PRACTICE. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE FOR BELFAST IN 2060 TO BE LUMBERED WITH 1960'S DESIGNS.

THE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF CYCLING FROM THE SOUTH AND EAST OF THE CITY TURNING LEFT INTO UU IS INADEQUATE AND SHOULD BE GRADE SEPARATED FROM GENERAL TRAFFIC (PREVENTING TRUCK CRUSH INJURIES).

I NOTE THAT THE DATE OF COMING INTO OPERATION IS 2021. TO WHAT DEGREE IS THIS PLAN IN LINE WITH THE MINISTERS VISION OF A CYCLING REVOLUTION IN BELFAST?

DOES THE PROVISION FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS PROMOTE OR DISINCENTIVISE DRIVING AS A MODAL SHARE *WITHIN* THE CITY (PARTICULARLY BETWEEN CITY CENTRE AND CITYSIDE RETAIL PARK)?

I NOTE THAT THIS PLAN WILL HAVE NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON AIR EMISSIONS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY BREACHING EU LEVELS. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ADEQUATE (READ GRADE SEGREGATED) PROVISION FOR CYCLISTS WOULD INCENTIVISE COMMUTERS TO TRAVEL BY BICYCLE INSTEAD OF BY CAR THUS IMPROVING AIR QUALITY AND REDUCING CONGESTION?

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

Pedestrian and Cycling Provision:

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

TransportNI is content that the Proposed Scheme is consistent with the principles of the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Bruce Harper)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Bruce Harper)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.3.11 Comment Number **COM11**
Name John McCorry, North Belfast Partnership
Date submitted..... 10 March 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS FROM NORTH BELFAST PARTNERSHIP (NBP) IN RESPONSE TO THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE PUBLIC CONSULTATION WHICH IS DUE TO CLOSE 10TH MARCH 2015.

NBP ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF UPGRADING THE YORK STREET JUNCTION AS IT IS USED BY 100,000 VEHICLES PER DAY. THE PROPOSAL TO MAKE IT A GRADE-SEPARATED INTERCHANGE, IE HAVE A NUMBER OF ROADS RUNNING THROUGH TUNNELS UNDER THE YORK STREET/YORK ROAD JUNCTION IS ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE PREFERRED OPTION. NBP SUPPORTS THE KEY DRIVERS FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT AS THE BELFAST PORT WHICH FORMS PART OF THE EASTERN SEABOARD KEY TRANSPORT CORRIDOR AND THE NEED TO SEEK AN IMPROVED SOLUTION TO THE TRANSPORT RELATED PROBLEMS AS IDENTIFIED BY THE REGIONAL STRATEGIC TRANSPORT NETWORK TRANSPORT PLAN. NBP UNDERSTANDS THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT IS A STRATEGIC ROAD INVESTMENT SCHEME (SRI) AND AS SUCH FOLLOWS AN AGREED PROCESS WHICH IS SET OUT IN THREE STAGES:

STAGE 1 SCHEME ASSESSMENT: THIS IDENTIFIED 6 PROPOSALS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY FOR YOUR AREA. FOUR PROPOSALS WERE IDENTIFIED AS GOING FORWARD TO STAGE 2.

STAGE 2 SCHEME ASSESSMENT: THIS STAGE EXAMINED THE FOUR PROPOSALS AND CHOSE A PREFERRED OPTION.

STAGE 3 SCHEME ASSESSMENT: FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PREFERRED OPTION A PRELIMINARY DESIGN IS DEVELOPED TO INFORM THE PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT DESIGNATION ORDER (PLANNING), AND THE DRAFT VESTING ORDER AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT.

NBP ACKNOWLEDGES THE CONSULTATION PROCESS THAT IS UNDERWAY VIA LETTERS, EMAILS, AND PRESENTATIONS AND THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT, COPIES OF WHICH WERE AVAILABLE AT THE CONSULTATION, ALSO INCLUDES THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN. THE FORMAL CONSULTATION ENDS ON 10TH MARCH 2015.

NBP WELCOMES THE ESTIMATED ECONOMIC MULTIPLIER ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROJECT, FORECAST AT FOR EVERY £1.00 COST, £2.33 BENEFIT IS DELIVERED TO USERS. HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DISADVANTAGES AND INCONVENIENCE INCURRED BY RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND COMMUNITIES ON THE FRINGE OF THIS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT I.E. LITTLE GEORGE STREET.

The economic assessment was completed in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. As part of this, the impact on road users, due to the effects of traffic disruption on adjacent streets during and after

construction of the Proposed Scheme, was considered. The separately completed Environmental Statement considers the environmental impact (both during construction and operation) on adjacent communities. This includes consideration of: air quality; noise; landscape and visual effects; land use; and pedestrians, cyclists and community effects.

NBP WELCOMES THE INCLUSION OF CYCLES-LANES INCORPORATED INTO THE DESIGN FOR YORK STREET/YORK ROAD AND THE SINGLE USE LANE NORTHBOUND, AND A MULTI-USE LANE SOUTHBOUND (CYCLES AND BUSES).

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

NBP ENCOURAGE TRANSPORT NI BE MINDFUL OF THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS AND SURROUNDING PROPERTIES AND GARDENS. NBP WISH TO HIGHLIGHT THE CONCERNS OF RESIDENTS RELATING TO OVERSHADOWING OF THEIR PROPERTY AND POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS IN NATURAL LIGHT CAUSE BY THESE PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS. NBP WELCOMES PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH REINFORCED SLOPE WHICH CAN BE PLANTED.

TransportNI has completed a daylight assessment of the Proposed Scheme to determine the impacts, if any, on the adjacent residential properties at North Queen Street, Little Georges Street and Molyneaux Street. The assessment has shown that all living rooms, which are the only occupied rooms of the existing buildings that are affected by the Proposed Scheme, would still enjoy adequate daylight after the Proposed Scheme is in place.

NBP ACKNOWLEDGES PROJECT TIMELINES RELATED TO CONSTRUCTION WILL COMMENCE IN APRIL 2018 AND COMPLETE IN MARCH 2021 IF THE CONTRACTORS ARE GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO PROCEED. THE PROCUREMENT PERIOD FOR THE CONTRACTOR IS ENVISAGED TO BE APPROXIMATELY 18 MONTHS TO 2 YEARS AND THAT THIS IS INDUSTRY STANDARD PROCUREMENT TIMES.

Construction Programme

It is anticipated that the scheme would require a minimum period of just over 3 years (38 months) to construct, subject to the advance completion of service diversion works or advance placement of service diversion Orders with the relevant utility providers. Based on the current programme, TransportNI expects construction works to commence in Autumn 2017, subject to successful progression of the Statutory Orders procedures (including Public Inquiry), availability of funding, and detailed economic appraisal. On this basis, the scheme could be completed by late 2020.

NBP ASK THAT TRAFFIC DISPLACEMENT IS ADDRESSED AS IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT WILL INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY TRAFFIC ON CORPORATION STREET DUE TO NELSON STREET BEING CLOSED OFF. THIS WAS ACKNOWLEDGED HOWEVER AN ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN AND IT INDICATED THAT THE THOROUGHFARE CAN COPE WITH THE INCREASE IN TRAFFIC.

Traffic displacement

As part of the overall operational assessment of the Proposed Scheme, the Cost Benefit Analysis (COBA) model developed identifies links and junctions where traffic demand exceeds operating capacity.

The completed Traffic and Economic assessment of the Proposed Scheme confirms that traffic volumes on Corporation Street would increase due to the effects of traffic displacement (owing to the closure of Nelson Street).

As illustrated in Figure 5.6.6 of Part 2 of the Proposed Scheme Report, no links or junctions on Corporation Street have been identified to exceed operating capacity. The environmental impacts of the resultant increase in traffic volumes have been considered in the published Environmental Statement.

NBP HIGHLIGHTED CONCERNS THAT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE WILL INCREASE TRAFFIC FROM THE M2 AND WESTLINK EXITING AT THIS JUNCTION TOWARDS THE CITY CENTRE THEREFORE CREATING ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON LOCAL TRAFFIC. THIS SHOULD BE REVIEWED AND CATERED FOR AS PART OF THE PROJECT.

City Centre Traffic

In the current junction layout, a direct connection from the M2 to City Centre is not provided via the Nelson Street off-slip. The signed route for the City Centre from the M2 is via the Duncrue Street off-slip, Whitla Street, Garmoyle Street and Corporation Street and this would remain the case in the Proposed Scheme.

Currently, traffic on the Westlink intending to travel to the City Centre is directed to use the Clifton Street junction and this would remain the case in the Proposed Scheme.

IT WAS HIGHLIGHTED THAT CORPORATION STREET/DUNBAR LINK/FREDRICK STREET AND NORTH QUEEN STREET, IS ALREADY STOPPED UP AND THAT TRAFFIC WILL INCREASE CONSIDERABLY DUE TO THE EXTENSION OF ULSTER UNIVERSITY AND CITY TRAFFIC AT THE CLIFTON STREET ON/OFF SLIPWAYS TO THE WESTLINK. THIS JUNCTION ALREADY EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT TRAFFIC CONGESTION AT ALL TIMES OF THE DAY AND SHOULD BE REVIEWED AS PART OF THE INTERCHANGE PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS.

Corporation Street Traffic Increase

As part of the Proposed Scheme, it is expected that traffic flows on Corporation Street would increase, but Corporation Street has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional traffic.

Impact of additional traffic on local road network

The purpose of the Proposed Scheme is to address the bottleneck on the strategic road network. Any additional trips on the local road network would continue to be influenced by operating conditions across the wider network.

Clifton Street slips and Frederick Street/North Queen Street Traffic Increase

The assessment of the Proposed Scheme indicates that although strategic traffic movements would improve, traffic volumes at the Clifton Street on-slip junction, Clifton Street off-slip junction and the Frederick Street/North Queen Street junction would increase in the year of opening and exceed operating capacity.

NBP FEEL THE PROJECT PLANS AS PRESENTED ARE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY CAR ORIENTATED. ARGUABLY THERE IS A REQUIREMENT FOR THE INTEGRATION OF MORE PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY AND PERSON FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT TO ATTRACT FOOTFALL ACTIVITIES TO AND FROM THE CITY. NBP ASK IS THE PUBLIC THOROUGHFARE AND ASSOCIATED WALKWAYS BEING IMPROVED TO BEST EFFECT? NBP

WOULD ARGUE THERE IS A NEED FOR CREATIVE AND ATTRACTIVE SOLUTIONS FOR PEDESTRIANS THAT ARE COMPLEMENTARY TO ROAD USAGE. ON THIS BASIS IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE YORK STREET BRIDGE DOES NOT BREAK THE EYE LINE VISTA ALONG YORK STREET FOR PEDESTRIANS AND OFFERS MORE THAN A ROADWAY TO SERVE MOVEMENT OF TRAFFIC. PEOPLE NEED A PLEASANT BUILT ENVIRONMENT, AND BRIDGE FAÇADE WITH PLACES TO STOP, AREAS TO SHELTER, AND SPATIAL PLANNING THAT FITS WITH THE UU CAMPUS BUILD.

Landscape & Visual

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. The detailed planting schedule would be developed as the scheme design progresses.

Pedestrian Provision:

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great Georges Street. It is considered that these changes and additional improvements to each of the remaining signalised junctions, would benefit non-motorised road users through improved amenity on these routes.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the city centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped-kerbs and tactile paving.

Strategic Advisory Group

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report, including the Environmental Statement, TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation.

IT WAS SUGGESTED USING THE FOOTPATH FOR BOTH PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS AS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. THIS WAS THE PREFERENCE OF THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING WHO WERE MADE AWARE THAT CYCLIST FORUMS ARE LOBBYING FOR SEGREGATE CYCLE LANES.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

NBP FELT THAT MONEY NEEDS SET ASIDE TO SOFTEN THE AREA AND ANY HARSH PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECT

IMPROVEMENT PLANS I.E. QUALITY MATERIALS, SPATIAL LAYOUT AND DESIGN AROUND THE BRIDGE AREAS AT NORTH QUEEN STREET, YORK STREET AND CLIFTON STREET AND THAT FOLIAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS ARE USED TO IMPROVE THE AESTHETICS OVERALL.

Landscape & Visual

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. The detailed planting schedule would be developed as the scheme design progresses.

Strategic Advisory Group

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report, including the Environmental Statement, TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation.

NBP WOULD WELCOME REGULAR FEEDBACK FROM THE WORKING GROUP THAT LOOK AT FINISHES AND AESTHETICS, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET REPRESENTATIVES COLLECTIVELY, THE ARTS COUNCIL AND TWO INDEPENDENTS, FORUM FOR ALTERNATIVE BELFAST BEING ONE OF THOSE INDEPENDENTS.

At the upcoming Public Inquiry, a report summarising the considerations of the SAG will be made available for inspection by any interested parties.

PARTICIPANTS WANTED COGNISANCE TAKEN OF SENSITIVE LOCAL ISSUES SUCH AS THE AREA.

NBP ARE PLEASED THAT THE PROJECT IS GIVING DUE CONSIDERATION TO NATURE AND WILDLIFE IN THE AREA.

welcomes your comment and you will note that Chapter 10 in Volume 1 of the published Environmental Statement considers the impact of the Proposed Scheme on Ecology and Nature Conservation.

NBP PROPOSED EARLY OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE USED TO DISPOSE OF UNUSED AREAS WITH A REDEVELOPMENT BRIEF THAT RELATES TO THE WIDER ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS. TRANSPORT NI ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THESE AREAS ARE ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE SPACES. IT WAS STATED THAT THE LAND WILL BE DISPOSED OF VIA DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES. HOWEVER, IT WAS FELT THAT THIS WOULD LIMIT THE ABILITY FOR THE LAND TO BE USED CREATIVELY, AS UNUSED LAND IS USUALLY EARMARKED FOR PARKING, LANDSCAPING OR ROADS AND NOTHING ELSE. THIS LAND SHOULD BE USED CREATIVELY AND TO STIMULATE INVESTMENT, JOB CREATION AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, PERHAPS VIA A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT TRUST OR ENTERPRISE AGENCY.

THE CITY CENTRE MASTER PLAN WAS RAISED FOR DISCUSSION. IT WAS FELT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE EARLY INTEGRATION OF THESE AREAS IN THEIR STRATEGY.

IT WAS FELT BY THOSE PRESENT THAT ANY SPARE LAND SHOULD BE KEPT GREEN AND LANDSCAPED.

Landscape & Visual

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment,

appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. The detailed planting schedule would be developed as the scheme design progresses.

Strategic Advisory Group

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report, including the Environmental Statement, TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. This included representatives from Belfast City Council and the Department for Social Development. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics, enhance user appreciation and future land use.

Upon completion of the Proposed Scheme, a number of surplus land parcels have been identified, as shown on Figure 12.5 in Volume 3 of the Environmental Statement. The layout of the Proposed Scheme has provided access to these identified land parcels. However, TransportNI has no remit to direct the proposed use of surplus land and it is considered that the Greater Clarendon Masterplan is the appropriate document to consider the future use of such land parcels.

NBP PROPOSED SOCIAL CLAUSES WERE INCORPORATED INTO THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS. IT WAS FELT THAT THIS WOULD BE BENEFICIAL FOR THE AREA TO HAVE THESE CLAUSES PLACED IN THE PROCUREMENT BRIEF FOR THE INTERCHANGE PROJECT. TRANSPORT NI ADVISED THEY ALWAYS INCLUDE SOCIAL CLAUSES IN LARGE SCALE CONTRACTS AND THAT DEL WILL MONITOR THIS. NBP FELT LOCAL INPUT TO THE UPTAKE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT SOCIAL CLAUSES WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS.

Social Clauses

TransportNI confirms that social clauses would be incorporated within a future construction contract, in line with current Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) guidance.

THOSE REPRESENTING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AT THE MEETING WERE CONTENT WITH THE PROJECT PROPOSALS DID NOT IMPEDE THEIR BUSINESS SERVICES TO ANY SIGNIFICANT LEVEL.

TransportNI notes your comment in relation to the business community.

NBP PROPOSED THAT COMPENSATION FOR RESIDENTS BE CONSIDERED WHERE ALTERATIONS TO HOMES SUCH AS TRIPLE GLAZING ARE REQUIRED TO REDUCE NOISE POLLUTION.

Noise

A Noise & Vibration assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 13 in Volume 1 of the ES. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 13.7 of the ES, which includes the approximate length and height of proposed acoustic barriers along part of the Westlink. An indicative location for the proposed acoustic barrier along the Westlink, is shown on Figure 13.3 and on Figure 11.7 (Sheets 2 & 3) in Volume 3 of the ES.

Thin Surface Course System (TSCS), otherwise known as low noise surfacing, would also be provided on interchange links between Westlink, M2 and M3, and the slip roads from these to the local road network. Whilst the noise benefits of this surfacing are mainly evident at higher speeds, there would be some benefits at lower speeds on the Proposed Scheme. However, no correction for the low noise surfacing

has been included in the calculations and, hence, the noise assessment is a worst-case assessment.

The results of the noise impact assessment indicate that no properties would qualify for noise insulation.

NBP REQUESTED THAT TRANSPORT NI MONITOR NOISE LEVELS AND POLLUTION CHANGES TO MINIMISE DISRUPTION LOCALLY FOR RESIDENTS. IT WAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IF PEOPLE/RESIDENTS ARE NOT LOSING LAND, THEN THERE WILL BE NO COMPENSATION AVAILABLE. PART 2 CLAIMS ARE ASSESSED ONE YEAR AFTER THE OPENING OF THE ROAD. NBP ACKNOWLEDGED IF THE RATEABLE VALUE OF A PROPERTY HAS REDUCED DIRECTLY AS A RESULT OF THE ROAD WORKS PROJECT THEN CLAIMS CAN BE MADE.

Construction disruption

Construction-related impacts and overall buildability issues are given very careful consideration by TransportNI. Section 4.7 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement (ES) details the proposed construction sequence and construction programme. Construction-related impacts are also assessed and mitigation proposed in each of the technical chapters (Chapters 8 to 17) in Volume 1 of the ES. Moreover, in line with the guidance contained within Interim Advice Note 183/14, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has been prepared for the Proposed Scheme and is contained within Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the ES. The EMP forms an outline plan and is closely aligned with the design and assessment process contained within Part II of the ES (Chapters 8 to 17). The EMP would be further refined and expanded by the appointed Contractor into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as more information becomes available and there is more certainty in terms of the proposed layout, construction methods, programme and the likely environmental effects.

An indication of likely working hours is outlined in Section 3.1 of the EMP (Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the ES). This section states that during night working, the Contractor shall not undertake operations likely to result in significant disturbance at nearby sensitive receptors (as illustrated on Figure 13.1 in Volume 3 of the ES) and residential properties, including, but not limited to, Little Georges Street, North Queen Street and Molyneaux Street. Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit has powers under the Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978 to impose requirements as to the times during which work may be carried out and the methods of work to be used.

The appointed contractor would be responsible for the management of the environmental impacts of the construction works, in accordance with their Construction Environmental Management Plan and the requirements of Belfast City Council's Environmental Health Department.

Verification Report

TransportNI confirms that, subject to the scheme proceeding, it would prepare an operational phase Verification Report to confirm / inform Noise Insulation Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 eligibility and identify any actions arising out of duties under the Environmental Noise Directive.

NBP WAS INFORMED THAT THERE IS NO COMPENSATION FOR DISRUPTION TO BUSINESSES BUT THE CONTRACTOR MUST MAINTAIN ACCESS TO PLACES OF BUSINESS AND RESIDENCE THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT.

Traffic Management during Construction

A Temporary Traffic Management Strategy Group (TTMSG) has been established to consider requirements for temporary traffic management during the construction period. The TTMSG is considering several issues, including:

Requirements for minimum lane provision through the works;

Alternative routes during the construction period;

Communication with the general public and other key stakeholders.

A notional construction sequence is included in Section 4.7 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. In addition, construction-related mitigation proposals in relation to access and local vehicle movements is outlined in sub-section 14.7.2 in Volume 1 of the ES.

NBP WAS INFORMED THAT THE PROGRESS OF THE PROJECT WAS DEPENDENT UPON GOVERNMENT AND AVAILABLE BUDGETS, HOWEVER, THE SCHEME SHOULD BE WELL SUPPORTED AS IT IS IN A KEY REGENERATION AREA AND IS LIKELY TO GET ALL PARTY SUPPORT.

Availability of Finance

As noted, the progression of the Proposed Scheme to construction is dependent on several factors, including the availability of funding.

IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT THE SCHEME WILL GO TO PUBLIC ENQUIRY.

Public Inquiry

Given the nature of the proposals and the likelihood that a number of the objections could not be resolved, the Minister for Regional Development approved the holding of a Public Inquiry to give TransportNI and the objectors a fair opportunity to be heard and to question the case for and against the Proposed Scheme. The Public Inquiry will be held in Assembly Buildings Conference Centre, 2-10 Fisherwick Place, Belfast commencing on 10th November 2015 at 10.30 am and continuing on such other days as may be determined by the Inspector.

NBP ENQUIRED IF AN ADDITIONAL RAIL HALT WAS MENTIONED AT GAMBLE STREET. TRANSPORT NI ADVISED THAT THEY HAVE RAISED THIS ISSUE WITH TRANSLINK AND THE TRANSPORT HOLDING COMPANY NI. NBP WAS INFORMED THAT IN ORDER TO INSTALL A DUAL RAIL LINE, THE FOUNDATIONS WORK WOULD NEED TO BE UPGRADED. ONCE THE SCHEME IS COMPLETE THERE WILL BE NO OTHER OPPORTUNITY TO DO THIS IN THE FUTURE.

Dargan Dualling:

TransportNI can confirm that works to construct a new rail halt at Gamble Street are not being incorporated into the Proposed Scheme. Translink continues to develop these proposals under a separate business case. However, as the Proposed Scheme would limit the opportunity to strengthen the foundations of the Dargan Bridge in future, these strengthening works would be undertaken as part of the road scheme construction contract.

NBP PROPOSED THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSLINK UPGRADING YORKGATE TRAIN STATION AS THIS STOP WILL BECOME THE MAIN FEEDER STATION FOR THE ULSTER UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. THIS WILL SEE AN INCREASE IN PEDESTRIANS, PARK AND RIDE AND CYCLISTS ALONG THE YORK STREET ARTERIAL ROUTE.

Yorkgate Station upgrade

TransportNI notes that such works are beyond the scope of its Proposed Scheme and would have to be separately developed, financed and implemented by Translink.

NBP WAS INFORMED THAT BCC ARE WORKING ON CYCLE ROUTES AND THAT TRANSPORT NI IS LINKING IN WITH BCC IN THIS RESPECT.

Cycle Routes

TransportNI confirms that it is working with Belfast City Council in relation to cycle routes.

THE MEETING ENQUIRED IF IT IS FEASIBLE TO INCLUDE CROSSING POINTS AT SOME AGREED INTERVAL ALONG THE YORK ROAD. TRANSPORT NI AND URS WERE ASKED TO CONSIDER THE DISTANCE BETWEEN CROSSING POINTS FOR PEDESTRIANS ALONG THIS YORK STREET ROUTE AND NEW BRIDGE.

York Street crossing points

The proposals presented for consultation are considered to address the potential future demand for pedestrians and cyclists on York Street, following the relocation of the Ulster University campus.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped-kerbs and tactile paving.

THESE COMMENTS ARE SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF NORTH BELFAST PARTNERSHIP AND THOSE STAKEHOLDERS IN ATTENDANCE AT THE CONSULTATION EVENING.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments John McCorry (North Belfast Partnership)

It is clear from the correspondence between the North Belfast Partnership (NBP) and TNI, that Mr McCorry and his colleagues support the TNI YSI Scheme proposals in general terms. At the same time they expressed some concerns and made a number of positive suggestions which they believed would lead to an overall improvement in the project if implemented.

Special mention was made of the need for creative and visually attractive solutions to enhance the appearance for pedestrians, with particular reference to the proposed York Street bridge. NBP suggested that funding should be set aside to soften any harsh physical infrastructure using quality materials and environmental enhancements. Places to stop and shelter should be provided on the bridge and the Scheme should be designed to integrate with the new University of Ulster Campus.

This issue was also explored at the Inquiry as part of the evidence submitted by Belfast City Council (COM12).

It is noted that NBP would welcome regular feedback concerning the work of the SAG looking at the finishes and aesthetics of the Scheme and also the opportunity to meet SAG representatives collectively. Perhaps there is a case for the NBP to be enrolled as members of this group.

NBP suggested that local input to the uptake and implementation of the project social clauses would be advantageous

For the discussions on the provision for cyclists, see Sustrans, OBJ32.

Considerations of the impact on residential areas such as Little George's Street are set out in Section 7.5 - 'Impact of The Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas' and recommendations connected with the same areas are shown in 8.2 - Residential Areas'.

Inspectors' Recommendations (John McCorry, North Belfast Partnership)

- TNI to discuss with NBP the possibility their becoming members of the SAG. Should this not occur, then TNI to arrange for NBP to receive regular updates on the activities and recommendations made by the SAG.
- TNI to investigate local input to the uptake and implementation of the project social clauses.

4.3.12 Comment Number COM12
Name Lucy Davison, Belfast City Council
Date submitted..... 10 March 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED BELFAST CITY COUNCIL'S DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR CONSIDERATION. THE RESPONSE WILL BE CONSIDERED AT THE COUNCIL'S SHADOW STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 20 MARCH AND IS SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING IN APRIL 2015. SHOULD ANY CHANGES TO THE DRAFT RESPONSE BE REQUESTED BY ELECTED MEMBERS YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED THE NEXT DAY FOLLOWING THE COUNCIL MEETING. IF YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR CLARIFICATION ON THE ISSUES RAISED, PLEASE CONTACT ANNE DOHERTY ON 028 9027 0387.

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL DRAFT RESPONSE TO YORK STREET INTERCHANGE – ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT PUBLIC CONSULTATION
BELFAST CITY COUNCIL WELCOMES THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT FOR THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE AS PART OF THE STAGE 3 ASSESSMENT PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS. A STRATEGIC ADVISORY GROUP HAS BEEN SET UP BY DRD TRANSPORT NI TO PROVIDE STRATEGIC GUIDANCE TO FACILITATE THE INTEGRATION OF YORK STREET INTERCHANGE WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE INITIATIVES AND ALSO TO REVIEW THE SCHEME AESTHETICS. THE COUNCIL ARE REPRESENTED ON THIS GROUP ALONG WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM DSD, PLANNING NI, ARTS COUNCIL, FAB AND TRANSPORT NI.
THE COUNCIL WILL WORK WITH DRD AND OTHER PARTNERS THROUGH THE STRATEGIC ADVISORY FORUM TO CONSIDER ACTIONS TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT OF THE SCHEME ON THE ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND TO CONSIDER THE AESTHETICS AND FINISHES OF THE ROAD PROPOSAL. THE COUNCIL ARE ALSO KEEN TO ASSESS THE REGENERATION OPPORTUNITIES OF SURPLUS LAND PARCELS RESULTING

FROM THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT AN EARLY STAGE TO MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL BENEFIT FOR THE CITY. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE YSI PROPOSAL WILL IMPACT ON A NUMBER OF DRD OFF STREET CAR PARKS WHICH WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO COUNCIL OWNERSHIP IN APRIL 2015.

OUR RESPONSE BELOW OUTLINES THE COUNCIL POSITION IN RELATION TO THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE PROPOSAL AND THIS IS FOLLOWED BY SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON TECHNICAL ASPECTS.

TransportNI notes your email and associated attachment of 10 March 2015.

BELFAST CITY CENTRE REGENERATION STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT PLAN (DRAFT)

THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE IS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CITY CENTRE REGENERATION STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT PLAN AS A SIGNIFICANT PROJECT FOR THE CITY. THE NORTHERN EDGE OF THE CITY CENTRE IS IDENTIFIED AS THE LEAST PERMEABLE, DEFINED BY THE MAJOR HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE WESTLINK AND M3. THE PLAN HIGHLIGHTS THE ISSUE THAT WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE THERE IS THE DANGER THAT THE BARRIER BETWEEN THE CITY CENTRE AND THE COMMUNITIES TO THE NORTH WILL BECOME EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED. THE CITY CENTRE REGENERATION STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT PLAN SUGGEST THAT INNOVATIVE AND INTERESTING WAYS MUST BE FOUND TO PENETRATE THIS BARRIER AND FOSTER CONNECTIONS THROUGH THE CONCRETE OF THE INTERCHANGE. UNDER THE POLICY OF "CREATING A GREEN, WALKABLE, CYCLABLE CENTRE" THE OBJECTIVE IS TO "REDUCE THE AREA OF ASPHALT AND INCREASE GREEN SPACE IN THE CITY CENTRE THROUGH THE PROVISION OF NEW OPEN SPACES, A COMPREHENSIVE STREETSCAPING PROGRAMME AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAGAN CORRIDOR AS A RECREATIONAL SPINE." THE DRAFT PLAN CONSIDERS THE NEED TO REBALANCE THE SCALES BETWEEN ASPHALT AND SOFTNESS ON CITY CENTRE STREETS AS A PRIORITY. WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE THERE WILL BE EXCESS ROAD CAPACITY ON SOME OF THE WORST OFFENDING PORTIONS, NOTABLY THE DUNBAR LINK, WHICH THE PLAN PROPOSES COULD BE REALLOCATED TO SUPPORT CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS.

THE PLAN ALSO OUTLINES A POLICY TO "CONNECT TO THE CITY AROUND" AND AIMS TO "REDUCE BARRIERS AROUND THE CITY CENTRE AND THE COMMUNITIES THAT SURROUND IT BY CONNECTING TO ACTIVITY IN ADJACENT NEIGHBOURHOODS,... REDUCING ROAD WIDTHS, IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS, STREETSCAPING KEY CORRIDORS AND IMPROVING THE BUILT FORM RELATIONSHIP AT THE EDGE OF THE CENTRE."

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT CAREFUL DESIGN IS REQUIRED FOR CONNECTING NORTH / SOUTH ROUTES FOR PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLISTS AND CREATIVE SOLUTIONS ARE NEEDED TO REDUCE THE VISUAL IMPACT OF THE INTERCHANGE AND MAKE USE OF OTHERWISE DEAD SPACE REQUIRED. THE PLAN SUGGESTS "UNDERPASS PROJECTS" TO IMPROVE THE VISUAL IMPACT AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY THROUGH THE M3 AND YORK STREET INTERCHANGE THROUGH PUBLIC ART, LANDSCAPING INTERVENTIONS AND COMMUNITY SPORTS FACILITIES.

FINALLY THE PLAN STATES THAT WITH SOME MODEST INVESTMENT IN THE DESIGN OF THE INTERCHANGE WITH THE AIM OF IMPROVING

DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION POTENTIAL AND NON-MOTORISED MOVEMENT COULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT FUTURE BENEFITS. THE COUNCIL WILL WORK WITH DRD AND OTHER PARTNERS THROUGH THE STRATEGIC ADVISORY GROUP TO CONSIDER HOW THE BARRIER EFFECT OF THE INTERCHANGE CAN BE MINIMISED.

Belfast City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan (Draft)

A Pedestrians, Cyclists and Community Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 14 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. This included an assessment of predicted impacts on Pedestrians (sub-section 14.6.1.12) and Cyclists (sub-section 14.6.1.13). Based on this assessment, mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed for the Proposed Scheme and reported in Section 14.7 of the ES.

Moreover, a Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment is included in these drawings. The detailed landscaping design would be developed as the scheme design progresses.

TransportNI welcomes the opportunity to continue to work with Council and other representatives to address a number of these issues through the Strategic Advisory Group.

BELFAST CITY MASTERPLAN

BELFAST CITY MASTERPLAN SETS OUT THE CATHEDRAL AREA PLACEMAKING SOLUTION TO DELIVER THE INTEGRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER AT CATHEDRAL QUARTER. THE PLAN STATES THAT WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAN FOR A NEW UNIVERSITY CAMPUS CARE NEEDS TO BE TAKEN TO SHAPE THE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT OF PUBLIC MONEY TO ENSURE THAT IT DELIVERS THE OPTIMAL SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL IMPACTS ON THE CITY CENTRE. BELFAST CITY MASTERPLAN RECOGNISES THE NEED FOR ALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY EXPANSION IN THIS PART OF THE CITY AND THE PROPOSED MAJOR UPGRADE OF THE MOTORWAY INTERCHANGE AT YORK STREET.

Belfast City Masterplan

Council's comments re. the Masterplan are noted.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS: CYCLING PROVISION

THE COUNCIL WOULD REQUEST THAT DRD RECONSIDER THE USE OF ON ROAD CYCLE LANES AND SHARED BUS LANES AS PART OF THE PROPOSED CYCLE PROVISION FOR THE SCHEME. IN OUR RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT NI BICYCLE STRATEGY, THE COUNCIL STRONGLY SUPPORTED HIGH QUALITY SEGREGATED CYCLE LANES IN URBAN AREAS PARTICULARLY ON ROUTES WHERE TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND SPEED MAY BE HIGH. IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THE YORK STREET PROPOSAL PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP SEGREGATED CYCLE LANES ALONG WITH OTHER INNOVATIVE MEASURES FOR CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE SUCH AS BUS STOP BY PASSES. THE COUNCIL WOULD RECOMMEND INPUT FROM DRD CYCLE UNIT INTO THE DESIGN OF THIS INFRASTRUCTURE FOLLOWING ON FROM CONSULTATION ON THE BICYCLE STRATEGY.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE VICINITY OF THE YSI PROPOSALS SUCH AS CITY QUAYS AND THE NEW UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT ON YORK STREET. THE NEED TO INCREASE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTIVE TRAVEL ACCESS TO THE NEW UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, THE CITY CENTRE AND THE HARBOUR AREA IS VITAL.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

OPEN SPACE

THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE PROJECT PRESENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE SIGNIFICANT AREAS OF NEW GREEN SPACE IN A SECTOR OF THE CITY CURRENTLY DOMINATED BY TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE. IN LINE WITH COUNCIL POLICY, SET OUT IN OUR CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PLAN, WE NEED TO INCREASE OUR NETWORK OF GREEN SPACES TO BALANCE INCREASED AMOUNTS OF HARDSCAPE ASSOCIATED WITH A PROJECT OF THIS SCALE. OPPORTUNITIES ALSO EXIST TO CREATE NEW GREEN BOULEVARDS THAT CONNECT THE NORTHERN QUARTER THROUGH DUNBAR LINK AND BACK TO THE CITY'S CORE.

THE NORTHERN EDGE OF THE CITY IS THE LEAST PERMEABLE, THEREFORE NEW OPEN SPACE ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT MUST BE ACCESSIBLE TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES, WELCOMING, EASY TO MAINTAIN AND INNOVATIVE IN TERMS OF LANDSCAPE TREATMENTS. THE PROJECT PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECONNECT THIS SECTOR OF THE CITY THROUGH GREEN WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES AND TO REDUCE SEVERANCE OF ADJACENT NEIGHBOURHOODS.

THE PROXIMITY OF THE UU CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT IS ALSO SIGNIFICANT. THE INTERCHANGE PROJECT ALSO PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEW CAMPUS AND FURTHER DEVELOP PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS TO THE CITY CENTRE.

NEW GREEN SPACES SHOULD ALSO BE DESIGNED TO REDUCE THE VISUAL IMPACT OF NEW ELEVATED ROAD STRUCTURES. THE COUNCIL WOULD SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION OF SIGNIFICANT MATURE TREE AND SCREEN PLANTING WHERE POSSIBLE. OUR CITY CENTRE REGENERATION PLAN ALSO ADVOCATES THE USE OF PLANTERS THAT DISGUISE HARSH CONCRETE SURFACES WITH VINES/CLIMBERS AND THE USE OF VIBRANT PUBLIC ART OR LIGHTING SCHEMES.

THE DEVELOPMENT ALSO OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO RE-DESIGN SPACES BETWEEN ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH ARE CURRENTLY DEAD SPACE. WHERE APPROPRIATE UNDERPASS AREAS COULD BE TRANSFORMED INTO PRODUCTIVE COMMUNITY SPACES USED FOR SPORT E.G. MULTI USE GAMES AREAS OR CLIMBING WALLS. A RECENT COUNCIL SUCCESS HAS BEEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'THE BRIDGE'S URBAN SPORTS PARK BENEATH THE M3 BRIDGE AT CORPORATION STREET. A MORE SIMPLE 'GREENING' APPROACH MAY PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFORMAL RECREATION E.G. SMALL URBAN PARKS WITH STRONGER CONNECTIVITY TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.

Open Space

As mentioned above, a Pedestrians, Cyclists and Community Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 14 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. This included an assessment of predicted impacts on Pedestrians (sub-section 14.6.1.12) and Cyclists (sub-section 14.6.1.13). Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed for the Proposed Scheme and reported in Section 14.7 of the ES. As also mentioned above, a Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment is included in these drawings. The detailed landscaping design would be developed as the scheme design progresses.

As mentioned previously, TransportNI welcomes the opportunity to continue to work with Council and other representatives to address a number of these Open Space issues through the Strategic Advisory Group.

AIR QUALITY

BCC HAVE BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH DRD ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR THE CITY AND YORK STREET INTERCHANGE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE MEASURES TO INCLUDE IN THE NEW PLAN TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY IN THAT AREA. THE SCHEME IS CONSIDERED AS A MEANS OF REDUCING LOCALISED EMISSIONS ON CONNECTING ROADS (I.E. AS A RESULT OF RELIEVING A SIGNIFICANT CONGESTION HOTSPOT) AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, INCREMENTAL REDUCTIONS IN BACKGROUND EMISSIONS, WHICH OF COURSE WILL HAVE A WIDER IMPACT ON EXPOSURE. IN RELATION TO AIR QUALITY OPERATIONAL AND CONSTRUCTION PHASE IMPACTS ARE OUTLINED HERE WITH A FULL RESPONSE INCLUDED IN APPENDIX 1.

OPERATIONAL IMPACTS:

THE URS REPORT HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PROPOSED SCHEME WOULD RESULT IN LOCALISED CHANGES IN EMISSIONS AS A RESULT OF MODIFICATION TO THE EXISTING ROAD LAYOUT AND ASSOCIATED TRAFFIC REDISTRIBUTIONAL EFFECTS, THE CHANGES IN CONCENTRATIONS WOULD GENERALLY BE OF AN IMPERCEPTIBLE OR SMALL MAGNITUDE, IN TERMS OF BOTH INCREASES AND DECREASES IN EXPOSURE. IN THE ASSUMED YEAR OF OPENING (2021) AND THE DESIGN YEAR (2035), PREDICTED ANNUAL MEAN CONCENTRATIONS OF NITROGEN DIOXIDE AND PARTICULATE MATTER WOULD BE BELOW NATIONAL AIR QUALITY OBJECTIVE VALUES AT ALL ASSESSED SENSITIVE RECEPTORS FOR BOTH THE DO-MINIMUM AND DO-SOMETHING SCENARIOS. OVERALL, THERE WOULD BE NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON EITHER LOCAL OR REGIONAL AIR QUALITY AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME.

CONSTRUCTION PHASE IMPACTS:

ADVERSE EFFECTS ON AMENITY AND LOCAL AIR QUALITY DUE TO FUGITIVE EMISSIONS OF DUST, PARTICULATE MATTER AND CONSTRUCTION RELATED TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS ARE NOT CONSIDERED TO BE SIGNIFICANT AND WOULD ONLY BE OF LOCAL CONCERN DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE.

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT HAS NO CONCERNS REGARDING THE AIR QUALITY IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME ON RECEPTORS AND WOULD SUPPORT THE SCHEME IN RELATION TO HEALTH BENEFITS IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DELIVER. HOWEVER, THE UNIT WOULD WISH TO CONTINUE IN CONSULTATION WITH

DRD REGARDING THE OPERATIONAL AND CONSTRUCTION PLANS FOR THE PROPOSED SCHEME.

Air Quality

TransportNI notes that Council has reviewed the Air Quality chapter of the ES and in particular: *“Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit has no concerns regarding the air quality impacts of the proposed scheme on receptors and would support the scheme in relation to health benefits it has the potential to deliver”*.

TransportNI welcomes the comments made in relation to air quality and confirms it would continue consultation with Council’s Environmental Protection Unit regarding the operational and construction plans for the Proposed Scheme.

NOISE

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT WOULD REQUEST FURTHER INFORMATION AS OUTLINED BELOW WITH A FULL TECHNICAL RESPONSE INCLUDED IN APPENDIX 1.

OPERATIONAL PHASE

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT REQUESTS THAT ONCE THE SCHEME IS OPERATIONAL, THE APPLICANT DEMONSTRATES, BY WAY OF A VERIFICATION REPORT, THAT FURTHER ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED TO CONFIRM/INFORM INITIAL PREDICTIONS AS TO WHETHER OR NOT ANY PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE STUDY AREA MEET ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA UNDER THE NOISE INSULATION REGULATIONS (NI) 1995.

WITH RESPECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE DIRECTIVE, THE AFORE-MENTIONED VERIFICATION REPORT SHOULD DEMONSTRATE LIAISON WITH THE RELEVANT COMPETENT AUTHORITY (DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT) AND IDENTIFY ANY REQUIRED NOISE ACTIONS ARISING OUT OF DUTIES UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE DIRECTIVE.

Noise - Operational Phase

TransportNI notes the various comments made by Council in respect of Operational Impacts.

Furthermore, TransportNI confirms the results of the noise impact assessment indicate that no properties would likely qualify for noise insulation. The procedure for determining eligibility under the Noise Insulation Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 is defined in the document “Northern Ireland Modifications of The Technical Memorandum Entitled ‘Calculation of Road Traffic Noise’, published by Her Majesty’s Stationery Office (1988)”, published by Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland.

This document states that the first assessment of noise levels for eligibility shall be based on traffic counts taken during the 12-month period after the ‘relevant date’. The ‘relevant date’ is the date on which a road or additional carriageway was first opened to public traffic or, in the case of an altered road, the date on which it was first opened to public traffic after completion of the alteration.

The Environmental Noise Directive (END) Round 2 strategic noise mapping was completed in 2012, and the Round 2 Noise Action Plan for Roads was issued in 2013 (Department for Regional Development – Roads – Environmental Noise Directive Round 2 – Noise Action Plan 2013-2018, document reference CO401053/RNAP).

The Noise Action Plan describes how the Department for Regional Development (DRD), in conjunction with the Department of the Environment (DoE), proposes to deliver their obligations under the European Directive for Assessment and Management of Environmental Noise 2002/49/EC. The Noise Action Plan deals with

noise from both Major Roads and All Roads within agglomerations of greater than 100,000 inhabitants. The Noise Action Plan identifies Candidate Noise Management Areas (CNMAs). Some or all of these will eventually be confirmed as Noise Management Areas (NMAs).

The Noise Action Plan identifies one CNMA on the Proposed Scheme. This is the area of Little Georges Street.

With the Proposed Scheme in operation, noise levels to properties in Little Georges Street are predicted to decrease by approximately 3 to 7 dB (additional noise barriers are specified in this location), as shown in Figures 13.3 and 13.4 in Volume 3 of the ES. Hence, the Proposed Scheme addresses the noise issue for this CNMA, as required by the Noise Action Plan.

The END Round 3 strategic noise mapping will be carried out in 2017 / 2018. Based on the current programme, the Proposed Scheme would be in the early stages of construction. How the Proposed Scheme is to be catered for in the Round 3 mapping and subsequent action plans will be a decision for DRD and DoE.

TransportNI confirms that, subject to the scheme proceeding, it would prepare an operational phase Verification Report to confirm / inform Noise Insulation Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 eligibility and identify any actions arising out of duties under the Environmental Noise Directive.

CONSTRUCTION PHASE

THIS UNIT ADVISES THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SHOULD BE PRESENTED ONCE AVAILABLE:

SUBMISSION OF A REGULARLY UPDATED CEMP - (CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN). THIS UNIT RECOMMENDS THAT DRD INSTRUCT THE APPOINTED CONTRACTOR TO LIAISE CLOSELY WITH BELFAST CITY COUNCIL IN COMMUNICATING DETAILS OF THE VARIOUS PHASES OF WORK DEMONSTRATING HOW GOOD SITE PRACTICES WILL BE ADOPTED IN ORDER TO MITIGATE CONSTRUCTION NOISE AND VIBRATION IMPACTS. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE DETAILS OF NOISE REDUCTION METHODS TO BE EMPLOYED DURING PILING ACTIVITIES;

DOCUMENTATION DEMONSTRATING THE FEASIBILITY OF THE CHOSEN METHOD OF PILING;

FURTHER INFORMATION RELATING TO THE REMOVAL OF EXISTING NOISE BARRIERS AS PART OF THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE AND DETAILS OF PROPOSED TEMPORARY ALTERNATIVES;

A PROACTIVE STRATEGY AIMED AT REASSURING RESIDENTS IN ADVANCE OF ANY PILING OPERATIONS IS ALSO RECOMMENDED. EVIDENCE OF FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE CHOSEN METHOD OF PILING SHOULD BE APPROPRIATELY DOCUMENTED;

SIGNIFICANT NIGHT TIME WORKS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS LIKELY TO BE REQUIRED. DETAILS OF PROPOSED NIGHT TIME WORKS REQUIRED AS PART OF THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO BELFAST CITY COUNCIL WELL IN ADVANCE OF ANY SUCH PROPOSED WORKS WITH PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES CLEARLY IDENTIFIED;

EARLY COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES LIKELY TO IMPACTED BY NOISE AND VIBRATION IMPACTS DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE WILL BE AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF MANAGING COMPLAINTS. THIS UNIT SEEKS CONFIRMATION, BY THE APPLICANT OR CONTRACTOR THAT A COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS AND FOCUS ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CONSULTATION IN RELATION TO THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE.

Noise – Construction Phase

TransportNI notes the various comments made by Council in respect of Construction phase impacts.

The noise and vibration construction assessment, reported in sub-sections 13.6.2 and 13.7.2 of the Environmental Statement, was based on an indicative likely construction schedule and plant roster, and identified reasonable worst-case noise and vibration effects.

Once a contractor has been appointed and developed the detailed construction programme and associated plant schedule, the noise and vibration effects would be revisited. This would include a decision on the type of piles to be utilised (driven or bored), an assessment of necessary evening, night-time and weekend working, and the associated noise and vibration effects.

The contractor would be required to employ best practicable means to minimise noise and vibration levels during the works. TransportNI confirms that there would be liaison between the appointed contractor and Council Environmental Health Officers and affected residents, to ensure that noise and vibration during construction are effectively managed.

In line with the guidance contained within Interim Advice Note 183/14, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has been prepared for the Proposed Scheme and is contained within Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the ES. The EMP forms an outline plan and is closely aligned with the design and assessment process contained within Part II of the ES (Chapters 7 to 17). The EMP would be further refined and expanded by the appointed Contractor into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as more information becomes available and there is more certainty in terms of the proposed layout, construction methods, programme and the likely environmental effects.

The procedures for managing noise and vibration during construction, including a protocol for compliance monitoring, would be documented in the Contractor's CEMP, the final version of which would be agreed with Belfast City Council. This would include details of noise reduction methods to be employed during piling activities. TransportNI also confirms, subject to the scheme proceeding, that:

The feasibility of the chosen method of piling would be provided in the CEMP, or as a separate stand-alone document:-

The CEMP would include details of all temporary noise mitigation measures;
It would engage with potentially affected residents in advance of piling operations;
It would require the Contractor to engage with Council in advance of night-time works, with details of proposed night works and associated proposed mitigation measures;

It would appoint a community liaison officer or 'responsible person' to engage with communities likely to be impacted by noise and vibration during the construction phase.

CONTAMINATED LAND

BELOW IS A SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BELFAST CITY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT (EPU) WITH REGARD TO CONTAMINATED LAND. THE FULL RESPONSE IS INCLUDED IN APPENDIX 1.

WITH RESPECT TO POTENTIAL HUMAN HEALTH ISSUES RELATING TO POTENTIAL LAND CONTAMINATION ISSUES ASSOCIATION WITH THE SCHEME, THE EPU HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REVIEW CHAPTERS 16 AND 17 OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT. WITHIN THESE CHAPTERS, URS PRESENT A CONTAMINATED LAND RISK ASSESSMENT (CLRA) WHICH HAS BEEN COMPLETED GENERALLY IN LINE WITH RELEVANT CURRENT INDUSTRY GUIDANCE (*CLR11 MODEL PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF LAND CONTAMINATION*).

THE CLRA CONCLUDES THAT THE RISKS POSED TO HUMAN HEALTH ASSOCIATED WITH THE SCHEME ARE 'VERY LOW' AND THAT THE REMEDIATION OF ANY PREVIOUSLY UNIDENTIFIED CONTAMINATION ENCOUNTERED DURING CONSTRUCTION COULD ACTUALLY HAVE A 'SLIGHT/MODERATE BENEFICIAL' ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. THE EPU WELCOMES THE APPROACH TAKEN AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE WITH RESPECT TO THE MANAGEMENT OF ANY UNFORESEEN CONTAMINATION DURING CONSTRUCTION. HOWEVER, FULL TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE WORK COMPLETED HAVE NOT BEEN PROVIDED. THIS WOULD NEED TO BE SUBMITTED IN ORDER FOR THE EPU TO FULLY APPRAISE THE POSSIBLE LAND CONTAMINATION ISSUES. FURTHERMORE, THE EPU HAS SOME CONCERNS THAT THE RISKS POSED TO USERS / RESIDENTS OF ADJACENT SITES HAS NOT BEEN FULLY CONSIDERED.

Contaminated Land

TransportNI notes the various comments made by Council in respect of Contaminated Land.

TransportNI confirms that the data upon which the assessments (and associated conclusions) are based, are included in the URS Ground Investigation Report, dated June 2015, which was recently issued to you by our consultants (weblink emailed on 25-09-15 to Lucy Davison). We trust this addresses your concerns regarding the provision of full technical details of the work completed, and the potential risks posed to users/residents. This report will be made available to any interested party at the Public Inquiry.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme'.

A Team of Specialists from Belfast City Council made a number of sequential individual presentations at the Inquiry in the Afternoon of Day 2 as follows:

Mr John Walsh introduced himself as the Town Solicitor for Belfast City Council. He said he did not propose to make any substantive submissions but was present to support of the Council's witnesses if required. He asked to be allowed to make some points at the end if necessary.

There then followed a series of individual presentations by members of Belfast City Council Staff, details of which are set out as follows:-

Air Quality

'I am Arlene Jameson and I am the air quality officer for Belfast City Council. I have a BSc in Environmental Science and an MSc with distinction in Environmental Engineering. I have over 12 years' experience in pollutant dispersion modelling and specifically eight years of that is to the detailed dispersion of the air quality modelling.

I just want to start with some background to the legislative situation in Belfast at the minute in relation to air quality.

The European Commission has formally launched infraction proceedings against the UK for breaching nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) limit values under the EU Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC. Although the original deadline for meeting the limit values was 1st January 2010, extensions were agreed with those Member States that were able to provide evidence of credible and workable action plans for meeting the nitrogen dioxide air quality limits values within five years of the original deadline, i.e. by January 2015.

The UK has now completed a series of draft Air Quality Action Plans for submission to the European Commission. Public consultation on the draft plans closes on 6th November 2015 and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will submit the final plans to the Commission in December 2015. The UK is divided into 43 zones and agglomerations for air quality monitoring and reporting purposes. Of the two zones and agglomerations within Northern Ireland, the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area has been assessed as exceeding EU limit values for NO₂. Road transport has been identified as the dominant source of pollution in areas where the UK is exceeding NO₂ limit levels including the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area.

The UK is committed to bringing all exceeding zones and agglomerations into compliance in the shortest possible time. Local Authority air quality measures are vital in the process of tackling poor air quality and achieving the required reduction in NO₂. As such, local air quality action plans together with national actions will form a central part of the revised UK plans that will be submitted to the Commission.

Belfast Air Quality Action Plan.

Belfast City Council and relevant partner organisations have recently completed a public consultation on a new draft Air Quality Action Plan for the city for the period 2015-2020. The final plan will be available from December 2015 and it will draw upon all forms of air quality and transport planning activities, including sustainable transport options as well as engineering solutions. It is considered that successful implementation of the plan measures will improve road vehicle operations and promote and enable a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport to achieve compliance with the NO₂ limit values by 2020. This draft plan has been made available to Defra and it is understood that measures from it including the proposed York Street Interchange scheme will form part of the UK zonal plan for the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area; the UK's plans will be submitted to the European Commission to demonstrate that appropriate measures are being taken at a local level to deliver compliance and to prevent formal infringement.

York Street Interchange.

The M1/Westlink Corridor including the York Street junction has been declared as an Air Quality Management Area for predicted exceedences of the NO₂ annual mean air quality objective and also the NO₂ 1-hour mean objective.

The council has been working closely with the Department for Regional Development (DRD) on the development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for the City. The TransportNI (a business unit within the DRD) York Street Interchange scheme has been identified as one of the principal measures to include in the new Belfast plan to improve air quality in that area in relation to high levels of NOL at peak times. DRD did confirm yesterday that the scheme would specifically address peak time traffic.

The proposed improvements to this key junction will provide continuous links between three of the busiest roads in Northern Ireland; the M2, M3 and A12 Westlink. The scheme is considered as a means of reducing localised transport related emissions on connecting roads (i.e. as a result of relieving a significant congestion hotspot) and, to a lesser extent, incremental reductions in background NO₂ emissions, which will have a wider beneficial impact on exposure across the city.

Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement and its Appendices describe the air quality impacts of the preferred option associated with redevelopment of the York Street Junction. The assessment considers the effects on local and

regional air quality in accordance with the methodology for a 'Detailed' and 'Simple' assessment respectively, as detailed within the DMRB Advice Note HA 207/07.

Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 establishes a statutory duty upon Northern Ireland District Councils to periodically review, assess and manage air quality for a range of common ambient pollutants. A series of health-based standards for these pollutants, that are designed to protect the public and the environment, are detailed within the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Accordingly, the Council on reviewing the report has focused primarily upon the assessment of ambient pollutants prescribed within the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

The consultant has used Cambridge Environmental Research Consultant's (CERC) Atmospheric Dispersion Modelling Software (ADMS-Roads V3.2.4) to quantify local pollution levels at 18 relevant receptor locations. Additional predictions have also been obtained as set out in the DMRB approach to 'simple'.

Operational Impacts.

The URS Environmental Statement in support of the scheme has demonstrated that no exceedence of the air quality objectives will occur at relevant receptors in the assumed year of opening (2021) and the design year (2035), annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter are predicted to be below national air quality objective values at all assessed sensitive receptors for both the do-minimum and do-something scenarios.

Construction Phase Impacts.

Adverse effects on amenity and local air quality due to fugitive emissions of dust, particulate matter and construction related traffic movements are not considered to be significant and would only be of local concern during the construction phase. It is a requirement that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is prepared by the appointed contractor to mitigate any construction impacts. Correspondence with URS AQ Consultant to clarify the background conception.

Paper Response:

Mr. Robert McCracken QC's interpretation addressed:

- (a) whether it is lawful to grant consent for a development, which would result in a breach of limit values in the immediate area.
- (b) whether it would be lawful to grant consent for a development, which would worsen air quality in an area, which is already in breach of limit values.
- (c) whether, in an area where limit values are not exceeded, a lawful grant of consent, which worsened air quality, would be restricted to circumstances where the development was in accordance with the principle of sustainable development and project related mitigation was included in the scheme.

It is considered that point A does not apply to the York Street Interchange as by the time that the road is completed (in 2021), there will be no breaches of nitrogen dioxide limit values. The proposed new junction infrastructure will not cause a subsequent breach of the limit values.

Point B does not apply, as the road enhancements will not worsen air quality in an area, which is already in breach. The environmental assessment has determined that by the time that Interchange works are completed (2021),

nitrogen dioxide at all modelled receptors will be below the nitrogen dioxide limit values.

Point C does not apply since the Interchange proposals will result in slight additional traffic along North Queen Street and an associated slight increase in nitrogen dioxide concentrations at that location but it is considered that the Interchange proposal is in accordance with the principals of sustainable development. Moreover, nitrogen dioxide levels along North Queens Street will remain significantly below all nitrogen dioxide limit values.

Conclusion.

The overall message is that nitrogen dioxide concentrations in and around the York Street Interchange will all be below the annual mean and hourly mean limit values by 2021 with or indeed without the proposed road enhancements. The Interchange proposal will however, confer ambient air quality benefits for the closest receptors to the current junction; for example in the vicinity of Little/Great George's Street and also to the wider City by reducing background concentrations as well as some anticipated route specific reductions.

By way of example, in 2013, the Council commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory to undertake scoping work for the 2015-2020 Air Quality Action Plan. TRL completed detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling using ADMS-Urban and local met data for the York Street Interchange - modelled benefits indicated up to a 62% reduction in road NO_x and up to a 50% reduction in NO₂ associated with the proposed junction smoothing.

With the Interchange proposals, it is understood that some rerouting of traffic will occur along North Queen Street and therefore nitrogen dioxide levels are expected to increase slightly by up to 2mgm⁻³ in this area with the proposed scheme.

However, nitrogen dioxide limit values are not breached at North Queen Street and it is therefore considered that there is no incompatibility with the points of the legal interpretation provided by Mr. Robert McCracken QC.

It could be argued that the York Street Interchange proposal will better meet societal, economic and environmental needs by shortening journey times through the City and better connecting businesses to the Port of Belfast, the George Best Belfast City Airport, the Port of Larne, etc. The Interchange will also facilitate better commuter movement around the city.

Moreover, it should be noted, for example, that the EU SD Strategy objective is to minimise undesirable impacts on the economy, society and the environment; the requirement is not to eliminate them.

In addition, the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy has established as a Strategic Objective - ensuring an integrated and accessible transport infrastructure that promotes economic growth and social inclusion across all areas, whilst reducing emissions and adverse impacts. It could be argued that the proposed York Street Interchange fulfills this requirement.

Finally, the 2011-2015 Programme for Government highlights the benefits of improved journey times and safety on Key Transport Corridors due to completion of a number of major road schemes, including the M1/Westlink project and the M2 improvement scheme. A target of progressing the upgrade of key road projects and improving the overall road network to ensure that by March 2015 journey times on key transport corridors reduce by 2.5% was established. It is considered that the proposed York Street Interchange proposals are compatible with this objective.

PM 2.5.

In relation to particulate matter, under our statutory obligations we only report on PM10 concentrations. Defra under European legislation are required to report to the European Commission on PM2.5 concentrations.

Defra under the European Directive have to comply with monitoring site criteria for difference exposure situations throughout the UK for reporting purposes. Belfast is chosen as an Urban Centre site in which to report the urban exposure concentration of PM2.5 to the European Commission. BCC do not have involvement in this process. The Air & Environmental Quality Unit within the Department of the Environment is responsible for Air Quality Policy in NI.

Based on annual mean concentration PM 2.5 should not be above 20ug/m³. The PM2.5 2014 annual mean was 11ug/m³. Based on a three year average, Belfast should not reach PM2.5 concentrations of 18µg/m³ by 2020. Currently the 3yr average is at 11µg/m³ which is considerably below the legislation levels.

We will continue to review and assess air quality within this location as part of its statutory obligations under Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002. In addition, it is considered that post development monitoring of nitrogen dioxide concentrations in the vicinity of the York Street Interchange will assist in verification of the projected environmental and human health benefits of the proposed scheme.

Mr Coughlin Responded on behalf of TNI as follows:-

‘We note the various comments that you have made in relation to the scheme. You will appreciate that at a very early stage, considering the location of the proposed scheme, air quality was a very, very sensitive issue for us and had to be treated and assessed very carefully. We involved yourselves at an early stage and the dialogue between Belfast City Council and ourselves has been ongoing for some years now, considering the length it has taken to get to this stage.

Just to clarify that after the publication of the Environmental Statement, the Council did raise various queries and concerns in relation to the methodology for assessment, and I think Arlene has already mentioned that in relation to background concentrations. So, there has been ongoing dialogue between the Council and our air quality expert, Dr Garry Gray, in regard to that.

One other issue is in relation to the construction phase.

As the Council have highlighted, one of the biggest concerns that they would still have is in relation to appropriate mitigation and monitoring of air quality during the construction phase of the scheme, and they have reiterated the point that the contractor will be required to prepare a construction environmental management plan.

Indeed, I would draw your attention, Mr Inspector, to Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement, which gives an indicative Environmental Management Plan that the contractor would be required to take on and develop into a formal construction environmental management plan that would have to be consulted on with the Council in that regard.’

Noise and Vibration

‘My name is Miriam Quinn, and I have a Bachelor of Science honours degree

in Environmental Health, a postgraduate diploma in accoustics, and 18 years' experience working as an Environmental Health Practitioner.

As part of the Council's response and review to the proposal I should provide comment regarding Chapter 13 of the Environmental Statement relating to noise and vibration. I will firstly comment on potential noise impacts associated with the proposal once operational and then move on to the potential noise impacts associated with the construction phase.

Firstly by way of some legislative Background I would just like to highlight a couple of pieces of relevant legislation applicable to the proposal.

Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise.

The Environmental Noise Directive (END) was implemented in Northern Ireland by the Environmental Noise Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

The aim of the END is to avoid, prevent or reduce on a prioritised basis the harmful effects, including annoyance, of exposure to environmental noise.

The Regulations apply to noise from road, railway, airport and industrial sources. In Northern Ireland, the Competent Authority responsible for road noise is the Department for Regional Development. The Regulations require the Competent Authority to compile noise maps showing the noise occurring in a particular area whether from particular stretches of road or rail etc. The noise maps are produced using computer modelling. Whilst Belfast City Council is not the enforcement authority for these Regulations, the Council is nonetheless consulted by the Department for comments in relation to draft Noise Action Plans.

Following analysis of the noise maps, the competent authority identifies the noise pollution priorities and develops Action Plans to deal with noise from both Major Roads and All Roads within agglomerations of greater than 100,000 inhabitants. The Action Plans can require the implementation of measures to reduce or preserve noise in a given area. Action plans are required to be reviewed every 5 years or when a major development occurs.

The END Round 2 Strategic noise mapping was completed in 2012, and DRD issued the round 2 Action Plan for Roads in 2013. The Noise Action Plan identifies Candidate Noise Management Areas (CNMAs), some or all of which will be confirmed as Noise Management Areas (NMAs).

The second piece of regulation is Noise Insulation Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995.

These Regulations apply to all developments proposed by the Department for Regional Development and enable a resident experiencing increased noise from a new or altered road to have double glazed windows, supplementary ventilation, or double doors installed, subject to meeting the criteria of the regulations.

As stated above, while Belfast City Council is not the competent authority in relation to operational noise from major roads developments and END requirements, as the Council have been consulted on the application we have included comments in relation to the potential noise impacts.

The URS Environmental Statement (ES) advises that DRD's round 2 Noise Action Plan identifies one CNMA within the proposed scheme, the area of Little Georges Street.

The ES demonstrates, with the proposed scheme in operation, that noise levels to properties in Little Georges Street are predicted to decrease by

approximately 3 to 7 dB, subject to mitigation by emplacement of additional noise barriers (detailed in sub-section 13.7.1). The ES, therefore, concludes that the scheme addresses the noise issues for this CNMA as required by the Noise Action Plan.

The URS ES also advises that the Proposed Scheme is not predicted to result in any properties qualifying for noise insulation subject to the identified mitigation measures being successfully implemented by way of noise barriers.

Overall, the URS ES concludes that the operational impact of the proposed scheme in terms of traffic noise is assessed as resulting in a negligible increase at the vast majority of residential premises with a minor increase at other premises along North Queen Street when comparing the future year of 2035 with and without the scheme in operation.

The Council welcomes the statement by TransportNI that subject to the scheme proceeding, it will prepare an operational phase Verification Report to confirm/inform Noise Insulation Regulations (NI) 1995 eligibility and identify any actions arising out of duties under the Environmental Noise Directive.

Perhaps by way of clarification, the Department can reiterate today for the purposes of the Inquiry its commitment to carrying out such verification and review of predicted noise and vibration impacts once the scheme is operational.

The Pollution Control and Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 - Part III article 40 - Control of noise on construction sites.

This piece of legislation Belfast City Council has powers under the above mentioned legislation allowing the service of an enforcement notice specifying hours of work, noise limits etc. and plant and machinery but it is noted that these powers shall not apply to any such works carried out by a Government Department. However, the Council would expect the same degree of liaison and co-operation from the Department as it would from a private developer in demonstrating the adoption of best practices in line with relevant British Standards to minimise construction noise and vibration impacts.

Belfast City Council notes the response from TransportNI dated 2nd October 2015 in relation to comments made by BCC regarding further information that has been requested regarding construction noise and vibration impacts.

Most comments have been addressed. However, the Council would stress the need for the detailed construction programme including proposals for the chosen piling methods and hours of proposed works to be communicated and agreed with the Council well in advance of works commencing.

While the Council acknowledges the need to carry out certain works at night, it remains concerned that full details of such works will need to be agreed well in advance of such works commencing to determine what methods the Contractor proposes to employ to mitigate noise disturbance during the sensitive night time period.

Mr Spiers confirmed that TNI would continue to liaise with the Council. He also confirmed that TNI would prepare the appropriate operational phase verification reports in accordance with the legislation.

Mr Coughlin commented as follows:

‘Again, as with air quality, noise was also recognised at a very early stage as a very sensitive issue considering the urban location and the proximity of residential properties, and in that regard, and I think the Council will agree with

this, we have undertaken a detailed noise assessment as per the DMRB requirements considering both the operational and the construction phases of the scheme.

In terms of the construction phase in particular the Department, as you have just heard, made this commitment to inform the Council well in advance of the contractors proposed methods of working and have those agreed, because the contractor will have to comply with BS5528 in terms of construction site noise activities and proposed daytime and night time operating.

For the operational phase the Council have also picked up the fact that we are proposing a noise barrier along either side of the Westlink, in the vicinity of the North Queen Street Bridge running down the backs of the properties at both Little George's Street and on the other side of the Westlink at Great George's Street. The detailed design of that has to be finalised with indicative lengths and heights and I know there remains concern about the finishes, but that is all we state at this time.'

In response to Ms Quinn asking for commitment to on-going liaison in the future, Mr Coughlin referred to the comment that he had made in relation to air quality and said the same would apply to noise. He referred again to Appendix 4 in Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement, where there is a draft Environmental Management Plan for the construction phase. The Contractor would then have to take this on and develop it further into a formalised Plan which would cover the noise aspects during the construction phase.

Ms Quinn wanted to ask the Department if they could, provide a little more information as to how they would continue to liaise and engage with the community as well as the Council in relation to construction phase impacts and once operational how they foresaw this moving forward.

Mr Spiers replied that as part of the conditions of the contract the Contractor will have to employ a Community Liaison Officer, and s/he would be the first point of contact with the community using appropriate contact arrangements. He added that the conditions of the contract would ensure that the Contractor would be required to meet all the noise regulations in relation to the construction activities.

Ms Quinn responded that during the construction the Council would be there to deal with the concerns of the community including any disruption and complaints. The Council would also be happy to work with the community as well and carry out any necessary monitoring during the construction phase and also address any issues post construction in connection with noise and vibration.

Mr Wright intervened to say that based on his previous experience, having a Community Liaison Officer did not work. An eternal triangle of blaming was formed with people being told to talk to the Road Service (TNI) who said you have to talk to the Contractor. He suggested it would be more logical to have the residents and community leaders talk to a project leader appointed by the Contractor.

He went on to say that the noise impact had not mentioned health and wanted to know if the City Council expert was aware of the health impacts of noise as considered at a Public Inquiry earlier in the year.

He went on to claim that the DOE was going to look into the issue of PM2.5s in order to introduce best practice. He viewed PM2.5s as the new and scary pollutants, the carcinogens. Currently the only place that they are being monitored is in Lombard Street.

Responding to a point made by Mr Wright on air quality, Mr Walsh said that the Council's position in relation to the YSI had been clearly set out with due consideration given to the health impacts of the people who are living close to it.

Ms Brenda Murphy reintroduced herself as a resident from Little George's Street. She made the point that her house was single glazed and at present when road works are being carried out the whole house shakes. So, if work was going to be carried out at night, when was anybody in her street going to be able to sleep? Would the Scheme involve both day and night work?

The Inspector replied that he understood there would be a plan to address this issue and an answer had already been provided earlier in the Inquiry. He suggested that Mrs Murphy should take the opportunity to discuss her concerns on a one to one basis with the members of the BCC Team who were present at the Inquiry.

Mr Walsh added that it highlighted the need for engagement with the community so that people were aware of what was happening on such a sizeable project. This was particularly important when the statutory powers that the Council had in relation to noise were somewhat blunted because a Government body would be undertaking the work.

CONTAMINATED LAND

'My name is Brendan McClean and I am employed by Belfast City Council in Environment and health service. I have a BSc Honours degree in geology from Queens University and a Masters Degree in Environmental Monitoring and toxicology from the University of Ulster.

I will start of by giving a bit of background.

In January 2015 as part of the public consultation process into the proposed York Street Interchange upgrade, TransportNI provided to the Council a copy of the Environmental Statement for the proposed road upgrade entitled 'York Street Interchange. Proposed Scheme Report: Part 1. Environmental Statement, January 2015.

The Council's Environmental Health Service, Environmental Protection Unit reviewed the above-mentioned environmental statement with regard to contaminated land and provided the following technical response to TransportNI on 20 March 2015.

Comments:

The Council welcomes that the road upgrade proposals had been supported by a Contaminated Land Risk Assessment (CLRA), which had generally been undertaken in line with current relevant industry guidance. The proposals for addressing land contamination encountered during the construction process were also welcomed.

The Council notes, however, that the data upon which the above-mentioned conclusions had been drawn were not included in the Environmental Statement report and no details of the specific guideline values used to complete the human health and other risk assessments of the data were presented. At that time, the Council concluded that it could not therefore fully appraise the appropriateness of the work completed and the conclusions presented. The Council requested to review all relevant technical data before it could be satisfied that the conclusions with regard to the protection of human health drawn were valid.

In addition, the Council expressed concern that all pathways associated with the potential exposures to site users and users of adjacent sites had not been fully considered within the Environmental Statement. The Council highlighted that some elevated levels of Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons were detected within shallow groundwater beneath the site. However, no specific quantitative assessment of the potential risks to human health posed by vapour inhalation from these contaminants appeared to have been presented.

The above mentioned comments were acknowledged by TransportNI on 2nd October 2015 in their communication COM12. The Council was also referred to the following additional URS Ground Investigation report 47037827/GIR and dated 20 June 2015.

As part of the Council's consideration of the Ground Investigation report the following additional documents were obtained from the DRD TransportNI York Street Interchange website and reviewed.

York Street Interchange Factual Ground Investigation Report, comprising:

- A Causeway Geotech Limited Factual Report on Ground Investigation December 2013.
- York Street Interchange Additional Fieldwork Belfast Report September 2013.
- York Street Interchange Stage 2 Public Consultation Report November 2011.
- York Street Interchange Proposed Scheme Report: Part 1 Environmental Statement January 2015.

Following an announcement by the Minister that a Public Inquiry would be held to examine the York Street Interchange, the Council contacted URS on 14th October 2015 in order to seek further clarification on the following technical points. We have had response on these points but haven't had time to incorporate them here.

- Made Ground, information to address the risk of mobilising asbestos to the atmosphere and to offsite receptors and site workers.
- Information regarding former land uses within the site that may indicate a possibility of contamination.
- Additional information regarding targeted shallow made ground characterisation and assessment of asbestos containing material and Information regarding a control of asbestos risk assessment.

It is unclear whether waste acceptance criteria testing had been completed and a waste (soil) management plan been developed. It is considered that this may be an issue if plots of land are to be developed in the future. For example, any reprofiled areas for use as public space would need to be proven as suitable for that end use by chemical analysis and comparison to the relevant soil guidance values.

Groundwater: To address the risk of mobilising volatile organic chemicals in groundwaters to offsite receptors and site workers the following information would be required:

- Modelled groundwater flows or identification of perched shallow groundwaters.
- Modelled groundwater flows or level modifications as a result of the construction of the underpasses and.

- Completion of a piling risk assessment or assessments which characterise any shallow contamination which may be transported to the Sherwood Sandstone Formation.
- Ground Water Quality: To address the risk of direct contact with contaminants to site workers and off site receptors.
- The availability of additional water or soil chemistry data which has not been presented in the abovementioned reports.

At the time of compiling the Council's Statement of Case, detailed responses to all of these enquiries have not been received from TransportNI/URS. In order to assist the Inquiry to come a decision regarding the human health risks from land contamination, however, the Council has provided the following land contamination interim summation.

Conclusion:

The Council accepts that significant works have already been undertaken in order to characterise and understand the human health impacts from land contamination sources associated with the proposed York Street Interchange upgrade. It is noted that the scientific reports have substantially characterised the nature of the made ground and have provided the initial findings of intrusive sampling in report DRD-YSI-3-10A.

The conclusions reached tentatively indicate that there is no risk to local residents or site workers from made ground, based upon the data available to date. The Environmental Protection Unit acknowledges these conclusions and accepts TransportNI/URS's assertion that given the nature of the made ground and the numerous former industrial land uses located on land to be used for the Interchange upgrade, that further ground investigation works will be required as the Interchange upgrade process continues. This work may uncover new sources of contamination which would require assessment.

Furthermore, the Council notes that the majority of trial pits and borehole samples were taken at depth and would therefore welcome an assessment of human health risk based upon targeted shallow sampling to determine the risk posed by asbestos, heavy metals and organic contaminants in shallow made ground (less than 1m).

Accordingly, Belfast City Council would encourage TransportNI to continue to liaise with the Council regarding future analytical results of any made ground and hydrogeological groundwater monitoring. The Council notes TransportNI/URS's intention to generate a hydrogeological model in order to determine the likely impact of deep engineering structures on the surrounding water table. Changes to this water table may have implications for contaminant mobilisation, ground gas generation and contaminant transport to offsite receptors. However, the Council is broadly satisfied with the TransportNI's management strategy towards ground contamination and towards the mitigation of risk posed by contaminated land. The Council anticipates that additional analytical data and modelling will help to refine the conceptual site model for the development but it is recommended that adjacent residents and site workers' safety should continue to be a primary consideration.

Mr Coughlin responded that the Design Team were aware of many of the issues that have been raised by the Council. He thought that Mr McClean would appreciate and acknowledge that following the receipt of the reports, BCC had come back seeking a number of clarifications and these had been provided. A number of the issues raised would have to be addressed in the

Construction Environmental Management Plan and dialogue with the Council would continue, including specifying the scope and nature of the proposed testing regime.

He concluded by saying that they believed there was a relatively low risk of contamination based on the Ground Investigation Information Report prepared in June 2015. This had been given to the Council for their consideration.

DESIGN, LINKAGES AND CONNECTIONS

'My name is Anne Doherty and I am a Planning and Transport manager with Belfast City Council, and I have a BA Honours in Geography and NSE on Environmental Planning from Queens, and I have 20 years of experience working in the planning field and over 10 years working in planning and transport issues on behalf of Belfast City Council.

To start off on background; Belfast City Council has been closely involved in the development of the YSI proposal from option appraisal to a detailed response to the Environment Statement in March 2015.

We have provided input from our Technical Officers on issues which we have a statutory function and also reflected views from our elected members on wider issues in relation to the impact of the scheme. We are also represented on the Strategic Advisory group, of which I am a member.

My representation relates to the wider issues such as design (aesthetics and finishes) and linkages and connections.

The Council recognise that the York Street interchange proposal is an important strategic project for Belfast which will alleviate a significant bottleneck at the M2/Westlink junction. It is viewed to be strategically important for vehicular access in the city.

However, the Council would emphasise the need for careful design to reduce the visual impact of the interchange, and most importantly, the need for the proposal to enhance connectivity for non-motorised traffic such as pedestrians and cyclists.

The northern edge of the City Centre is identified as a poor pedestrian environment and is dominated by the major road infrastructure of the Westlink and M3. It is also an area with surrounding communities of high deprivation.

Design: Without careful consideration given to the design and aesthetics of the proposed scheme there is a danger that the barrier between the City Centre and the communities to the north will become even more pronounced. The Council requests commitment from the Department for Regional Development in relation to the investment in the design of the interchange proposal with the aim of improving development and regeneration potential, and also for non motorised movement, which could have significant future benefits for this area.

We do recognise that the DRD has set up the Strategic Advisory Forum which is considering issues such as aesthetics and design, linkages and connections and surplus land, however commitment to include recommendations from this group is needed in the overall project proposal and the bid for funding for this proposal.

Specifically in relation to pedestrian provision, it is recognised that the existing pedestrian linkage is very poor on York Street and the proposed separation of strategic and local traffic flows should greatly improve the pedestrian environment. We recognise that by providing new controlled crossing facilities at a number of locations, the proposed scheme could improve the pedestrian

experience.

However, the Council considers that it is critical that sympathetic and careful design ensures connected routes for pedestrian and cyclists alongside more creative solutions to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and make more effective use of potentially underutilised space. It is widely recognised that under utilised space can attract anti-social behaviour and increase community safety issues.

It is the Council's view that aesthetics must consider wider connectivity and not look at the scheme in isolation. The Council considers that the York Street Interchange Scheme should secure the enhancement of the wider environment to support improved connectivity for adjacent communities and these improvements should be included in the overall project budgets.

The Council would emphasise the need to minimise any impacts from the scheme on the adjoining residential areas and enhance connectivity through high quality public realm and finishes. For example, it has already been raised that the York Street interchange will present an opportunity to enhance the environment around the off-ramps and steps access in the North Queens Street area. The poor pedestrian access and physical environment has been raised by the local community as issues which should be addressed in the proposals for the widening of the North Queen Street Bridge.

In relation to underpasses, the proposed York street The Council would support inclusion in the scheme of a budget to ensure the upgrade from basic paving material and finishes to a high quality public realm that would link to the planned Phase 3 Streets Ahead initiative. We would emphasise the need for high quality landscaping through a comprehensive streetscaping programme as part of the overall project.

interchange and existing M3 currently act as major barriers to connectivity in the north end of town restricting crucial access to the Sailor town area, the Harbour and City Quays development.

It is the Council's view that making City Quays feel like a part of the city centre is dependent on finding a way to 'humanise' the underpass. The Council would support a programme of greening and landscaping as part of the York Street proposal which could make a big difference. Also a programme of vibrant public art and lighting which could make the area seem much safer.

Similar to the North Queen Street Bridge and underpass will be widened as part of the proposal and the Council would support a high quality finish and the use of lighting to enliven the pedestrian environs and the area beneath the structure. It is an important gateway to the City Centre and to the new University area.

In relation to surplus land, the Council are also keen to assess the regeneration opportunities of surplus land parcels resulting from the proposed development at an early stage to maximise the potential benefit for the city. The Council are now the local planning authority and can address regeneration and development potential of these sites through the LDP process.

The Council would also be keen to work with DRD to assess the underpass areas for the potential to be turned into productive community spaces.

Cycling Provision, the Council would strongly support high quality segregated cycle lanes in urban areas and considers that the York Street proposal presents an opportunity to develop high quality segregated cycle lanes. This will be in line with the DRD's own NI Bicycle Strategy which recommends high quality segregated cycle lanes in urban areas, particularly on routes where

traffic volumes and speed may be high.

There are a number of proposed developments in the vicinity of the YSI proposals such as City Quays and the new Ulster University campus development on York Street. The need to increase the opportunity for active travel access to the new University campus, the City Centre and the harbour area is vital.

In relation to access to Gamble Street Rail Halt, it is stated that potential strengthening works to future-proof the substructure of the existing bridge were under consideration and may form part of the construction works for the interchange scheme. The Council would strongly support the integration of the strengthening works as part of the construction of the proposed YSI. The Gamble Street halt could provide an important sustainable transport access to this area of the city.

It is also a wider issue that the Council have raised, that in addition a wider issue for DRD consideration is that the introduction of the York Street Interchange will result in excess road capacity on some of the City Centre routes that already have over provision for large parts of the day, notably the Dunbar Link, which the Council suggests could be freed up to support more sustainable transport, cyclists and pedestrians.'

Responding for TNI, Mr Spiers said that development associated with the Dunbar Link was outside the scope of the current proposal. However, it had been recognised that the Scheme would affect traffic flows to that area.

In relation to the SAG and ascetics, he confirmed that the Group would continue in some form and that the Council would be invited to be represented on that. The implementation of the proposals outlined to the SAG would be developed by the Department rather than passing it on to a Contractor. So, TNI would be in charge of what would be delivered so there would be more certainty concerning the end result. That commitment had already been given to the SAG.

He went on to say that three routes had been identified by the SAG. These were the York Street route, the George's Street route and finally the route down through Dock Street and back towards Corporation Street. In priority order, those were where resources would be concentrated to develop much more user friendly walking and cycling routes for non-motorised users. It was hoped to integrate with the other works that were being planned in the area by the Streets Ahead projects but it was unclear at this stage whether that could be achieved.

With reference to the proposals for the widening or strengthening of the piers on the Dargan Rail Bridge, Mr Spires said that Translink were undertaking a proof of concept. The expectation was that the resources would be available to upgrade the foundations as part of the YSI project in a manner that would allow widening or dualling of the rail link at some stage in the future. It would be virtually impossible to get access to those areas at a later stage with the proposed Scheme in place.

Mr Spiers concluded by saying that he had already made a commitment to look at the issue of the steps and that the treatment of underpasses had been developed within the SAG for the ascetic delivery of the scheme.

Mr Walsh commented that BCC would like to see strong and firm commitments in relation to the issues raised by Ms Doherty on behalf of the Council. As the Department were aware, there were Article 8 rights in play in certain instances.

In the case of Marina Gomez, which had been summarised in the judgment of Mr Justice Girvan, it had been clearly established that the individual has a right to respect for his home, meaning not just the actual physical area but also the quiet enjoyment of that area.

Mr Justice Girvan had gone on to say:

'It held that breaches of the right to respect of the home are not confined to concrete and physical breaches such as unauthorised entry into a person's home, but also include those that are not concrete and physical such as noise, emissions, smells and all forms of interference.'

Mr Walsh added that Article 8 could potentially be in play in some of these scenarios and that it was incumbent as a legal duty on the Department to consider those as live issues when it came to working out what the final design actually appears to be. This would be inflicted on communities and if it was not addressed correctly would lead to anti-social behaviour under underpasses or in areas not being appropriately landscaped. He said that these were real live issues for communities and they had been asked by the people to whom they had spoken to make that clear. There had to be a real commitment to tackle such issues.

Responding to a request for clarification by Mr McGuinness, Mr Walsh said that Article 8 must inform how the Department approached the issues that Mrs Doherty had set out. For example, in relation to the steps and underpasses, they needed to know what TNI proposed to do, as in the past there had been significant issues with anti-social behaviour. He added that clarification was required by TNI with reference to the people who would be potentially affected by the overall scheme.

Mr Walsh continued saying, that in the past underpasses were clandestine places, poorly lit, leading to all sorts of inappropriate anti-social behaviour which was inflicted on the local community. What he was looking for was a commitment that Article 8 would inform the approach in relation to such difficult areas and that the necessary expenditure to make those places safer would be incurred.

Mr McGuinness replied that the commitment that could be given was that TNI would consider all Human Rights aspects of the development, because this brought in Article 1 of the First Protocol which was the process used to consider all the Human Rights issues. He added that the Department was fully cognisant of all the Human Rights issues and were obliged as a Public Authority to take those into account under Section 8 of the 1996 Human Rights Act.

Mr Walsh asked Mr McGuinness to indicate what steps had been taken in relation to carrying out any human rights screening exercises in relation to the Scheme.

The Inspector intervened to point out that human rights issues were not within the scope of the Inquiry and in order to bring the discussion on this issue to a conclusion, he asked if Mr McGuinness could confirm that all the legal requirements under Article 8 would be honoured by TNI.

Mr McGuinness replied that the Department would comply with all the Human Rights obligations and that all of the policy, procedure and guidance was Human Rights compliant.

Mr Declan Hill intervened to say that he was one of the former Directors of the Forum for Alternative Belfast. He welcomed the Council's comments from Ms Doherty about the specification of the finishes of bridges. The pedestrian

experience of walking through this massive structure would be important, and he asked how TNI could ensure that issues such as lighting and planting would all be delivered to meet the expectation of the SAG which had only been in existence for the last few months. This was the group the Forum had been requesting for the past four years.

Mr Spiers said that he had confirmed to Ms Doherty that TNI would take on board the aesthetics issues and deliver the agreed landscaping design. This would not be left to the Contractor and this would ensure delivery to the standard agreed in the SAG.

Mr Megarry concluded the discussion by saying that it would be a question of defining within the contract documentation which design elements would be the responsibility of the Contractor and which would be retained by TNI. It was not simply a case of saying that since it would be a design and build Scheme, that all decisions would be made by the Contractor. TNI would be selective and identify those elements over which the Department would retain control.

Inspectors' Comments (Belfast City Council)

It was apparent from both the initial correspondence between TNI and the Council and the clear and concise presentations made by the Council Representatives at the Inquiry, that with a few caveats, BCC has been and remains supportive of the proposed YSI Interchange project.

The importance of the work being carried out by the relatively recently formed Strategic Advisory Group also emerged as a major positive step forward, as a number of diverse stakeholders have now become involved in the project, who have made significant contributions in terms of improvements to the overall design of the project.

However, whilst useful work had been carried in considering issues such as aesthetics, design, linkages and connections, the treatment of surplus land, etc., there appeared to be an undercurrent of uncertainty as to whether TNI would commit to implementing the recommendations of the SAG. Whilst it is accepted that Scheme costs must be controlled and that all final decisions must be made by TNI, it is to be hoped that every effort would be made to find the means and necessary resources to incorporate any proposed changes and improvements identified and supported by a majority within the group.

With regard to contaminated land, it was noted that the Council had contacted URS on 14th October 2015 in order to seek further clarification on the risk of mobilising asbestos to the atmosphere, its control and also details of former land uses within the site. Whilst BCC have had response on these points from TNI, they had not had time to incorporate them as part of their contribution at the Inquiry.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Belfast City Council)

- TNI (and in due course, the Contractor) to liaise closely with BCC throughout the remainder of the design phase and throughout the construction stage, to ensure that issues are identified and addressed as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- TNI to make every effort to find the means and the necessary resources to incorporate any proposed changes and improvements identified and supported by a majority within the Strategic Advisory Group into the Scheme.

- TNI to investigate the possibility of upgrading the basic paving material and finishes to high quality public realm features that would link to the planned Phase 3 Streets Ahead initiative.
- TNI to incorporate high quality landscaping as part of the Scheme through a comprehensive streetscaping programme.
- TNI to continue to liaise with the Council regarding future analytical results of any made ground and hydrogeological groundwater monitoring.
- TNI to generate a hydrogeological model in order to determine the likely impact of deep engineering structures on the surrounding water table.

4.3.13 Comment Number COM13

Name Gary Benson

Date submitted 10 March 2015

NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

I WISH TO CONVEY MY OVERALL SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME, HOWEVER, BEING A REGULAR COMMUTER CYCLIST IN AND AROUND BELFAST, I BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSALS DO NOT FULLY TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE NEEDS OF NON-MOTORISED USERS, IN PARTICULAR, CYCLISTS.

I HAVE READ THE BLOG BY LOCAL CYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY CAMPAIGNER, NI GREENWAYS, AND I AGREE WITH ALL OF THE POINTS HE MENTIONS IN HIS RECENT BLOG ABOUT THE PROPOSED YSI. I HAVE PROVIDED A LINK TO HIS BLOG BELOW, AND I BELIEVE THAT ALL OF THE ISSUES HE RAISES SHOULD BE VERY CAREFULLY CONSIDERED BY THE CONSULTANTS WORKING ON BEHALF OF TRANSPORTNI ON THIS PROJECT.

I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IS YOU COULD KEEP ME INFORMED ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING THIS PROPOSED SCHEME.

TransportNI notes your email of 10 March 2015 and welcomes your overall support of the Proposed Scheme.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Gary Benson)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

See Section 7.6 - Inspectors' Considerations -Provision for Cyclists.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Gary Benson)

See Section 8.4 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Provision for Cyclists.

4.3.14 Comment Number	COM14
Name	Geraldine Duggan, Belfast City Centre Management Company
Date submitted.....	12 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

BELFAST CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE TO DRD'S DRAFT STATUTORY ORDERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

1. INTRODUCTION

BELFAST CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT (BCCM) IS GRATEFUL TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND TO THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE THROUGH THE CONSULTATION PROCESS, LAUNCHED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

2. ABOUT BELFAST CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMPANY

THIS RESPONSE IS SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF BCCM, A PUBLIC/PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP, ESTABLISHED TO BRING TOGETHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE WITH THE FOLLOWING MISSION STATEMENT:

'BCCM WILL DELIVER ADDITIONAL SERVICES INTO BELFAST CITY CENTRE, ON BEHALF OF ITS CORE FUNDERS, WHICH CONTRIBUTE IN A MEASURABLE WAY TO A CLEANER, SAFER AND MORE ACCESSIBLE CITY'

WORKING AS AN OPERATIONAL VEHICLE FOR BELFAST CITY COUNCIL (BCC), THE DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (DSD) AND BELFAST CHAMBER OF TRADE & COMMERCE (BCTC), BCCM ACTS AS AN ENABLER, FACILITATOR AND COORDINATOR IN THE CITY CENTRE.

BCCM WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITS KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO DELIVER A SHARED CITY CENTRE AGENDA THROUGH BESPOKE ACTION GROUPS, FOCUSING ON THE FOLLOWING THREE AREAS:

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, PUBLIC SPACE MANAGEMENT AND SAFER CITY.

BCCM IS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND HAS BEEN STRUCTURED IN SUCH A WAY THAT ENABLES THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF BELFAST CITY CENTRE AND INFLUENCE THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BY THE REPRESENTATION OF BELFAST CHAMBER OF TRADE & COMMERCE (BCTC) ON THE BCCM BOARD. THE RELATIONSHIP WITH BCTC IS SET OUT IN THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE, OUTLINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BOTH ORGANISATIONS.

3. RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL

OUR RESPONSE IS BASED ON THE SCALE OF THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE (YSI) PROJECT AND THE IMPLICATIONS THAT WILL ARISE

AS A RESULT OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION, WITH CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO VISITORS, SHOPPERS, EMPLOYEES AND RESIDENTS.

CURRENTLY, THE NORTH SIDE OF BELFAST CITY CENTRE'S ROAD NETWORK IS MADE UP OF THE WESTLINK AND M3, BOTH OF WHICH ARE PERCEIVED TO BE A BARRIER TO ACCESSING BELFAST CITY CENTRE. BCCM IS CONCERNED THAT THE YSI WOULD EXACERBATE THE ISSUE BY CONTRIBUTING TO THIS BARRIER. CONSIDERATION NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO USE OF INNOVATIVE MEASURES TO MINIMISE THIS THIS BARRIER AND MAKE THE YSI MORE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE FRIENDLY.

Access for Pedestrians/Cyclists

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great Georges Street. It is considered that these changes and additional improvements to each of the remaining signalised junctions, would benefit non-motorised road users through improved amenity on these routes.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped-kerbs and tactile paving.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

Strategic Advisory Group

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report, including the Environmental Statement, TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation.

THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE (YSI) WILL BE A MAJOR PROJECT FOR THE CITY, IMPACTING ON TRAFFIC IN AND AROUND THE CITY CENTRE DURING ITS CONSTRUCTION PHASE. DISRUPTION TO TRAFFIC SHOULD BE MINIMISED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE AND AVOID KEY EVENTS THAT ARE HOSTED IN BELFAST CITY CENTRE.

Disruption

TransportNI is currently developing its Temporary Traffic Management Strategy for the construction phase. As a representative body for retailers and traders in Belfast City Centre, TransportNI will consult with Belfast City Centre Management Board in due course with regard to the development of the strategy.

THE YSI PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE LINKS IN SUPPORT OF CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS. THIS OPPORTUNITY NEEDS DEVELOPED TO ENCOURAGE CONNECTIVITY WITH THE NORTH OF THE CITY AND THE CITY CENTRE.

Access for Pedestrians/Cyclists

As mentioned previously, for pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped-kerbs and tactile paving.

Cycling Provision

Following the statutory consultation period, TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THE YSI NEEDS TO CONSIDER THE EXPANSION OF THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS AT YORK STREET AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITY QUAYS AND THE NEEDS OF THEIR USERS, WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE PARTICULARLY FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS WITH THE CITY CENTRE.

NMU Provision

The proposals presented for consultation are considered to address the potential future demand for pedestrians and cyclists on York Street, following the relocation of the Ulster University campus.

This is evident in the provision of cycle lanes (as shown in the revised proposal) in both the northbound and southbound directions and the provision of continuous pedestrian links, including controlled crossings, along the proposed footways on each side of York Street. The proposed southbound bus lane also provides an opportunity to improve direct bus links to the new campus from North Belfast and the strategic road network.

The Proposed Scheme is not considered to preclude opportunities to improve infrastructure for non-motorised users in the environs of the future City Quays development.

THE YSI PROJECT PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE NEW 'GREEN SPACE' WHICH IS LACKING IN THE CITY CENTRE. THIS OPPORTUNITY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. INNOVATIVE PUBLIC ART AND LIGHTING SCHEMES SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED AND DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE PROPOSAL.

Landscape Treatment

A Landscape & Visual Effects assessment has been undertaken for the scheme and reported in Chapter 11 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement. Based on this assessment, appropriate mitigation & enhancement measures have been developed and reported in Section 11.7 of the ES, and a set of Landscape Mitigation drawings are included as Figure 11.7 (7 sheets) in Volume 3 of the ES. Indicative landscape treatment is included in these drawings. The detailed landscaping design would be developed as the scheme design progresses.

Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report, including the Environmental Statement, TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics, enhance user appreciation and future land use.

In terms of scheme aesthetics, the SAG has identified a unified aesthetic theme which incorporates the use of feature lighting at identified locations.

Upon completion of the Proposed Scheme a number of surplus land parcels have been identified, as shown on Figure 12.5 in Volume 3 of the Environmental Statement. The layout of the Proposed Scheme has provided access to these identified land parcels. However, TransportNI has no remit to direct the proposed use of surplus land and it is considered that the Greater Clarendon Masterplan is the appropriate document to consider the future use of such land parcels.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Geraldine Duggan, Belfast City Centre Management Company)

It was noted that the Belfast City Centre Management Company (BCCM) submitted a document to TNI commenting on several aspects of the proposed YSI Scheme. They had some concerns and made recommendations, most of which were also raised by other individuals and organisations both before and during the public phase of the Inquiry.

These included:

- Better provision to be made for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Concerns about the potential disruption to traffic during the construction phase.
- Consideration within the project of the impact of the new University campus and the development of City Quays.
- The opportunity to create new green space within the project and
- The provision of innovative public art and lighting as part of the Scheme.

Since these issues are covered elsewhere in this Report, BCCM are advised to see in particular the sections relating to:

- Sustrans (OBJ32), together with Sections 7.6 and 8.4.
- Belfast City Council (COM12)

4.3.15 Comment Number	COM15
Name	Brian Mullan, Antrim Road Regeneration Committee
Date submitted.....	18 March 2015
NIMVO plot number	N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

IN RESPONSE TO THE DRD ROADS SERVICE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE AND PRESENTATION DISPLAYS HELD IN THE RAMADA ENCORE HOTEL AND DETAILS OF DRAFT STATUTORY ORDERS AND ALSO WITH THE PRESENCE OF DESIGN STAFF AND RELEVANT STAFF.

THE CONSULTATION WAS ISSUED AS FOLLOW UP PREVIOUS CONSULTATION IN 2011 AND TO CONSIDER THE SCHEME OPTIONS THAT HAD BEEN FINALLY WORKED UP, WE WISH TO REGISTER THIS RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE YORK STREET INTERCHANGE.

WE WOULD COMMENT THAT ROADS SERVICE, HAVE PRODUCED A GOOD SOLUTION AND DETAIL PROPOSAL ON THEIR OPTIONS AND GIVEN CONSIDERATION OF THE EFFECT ON COMMUNITIES ADJACENT TO THE INTERCHANGE AND PREVIOUS COMMENTS AND SHOULD GET SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITY GROUPS AND RESIDENTS ON THE PREFERRED OPTION AND CERTAINLY THE MODEL AND DVD HELPS.

TransportNI welcomes your support of the Proposed Scheme and its process of development in conjunction with key stakeholders.

THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES MOST AFFECTED BY THIS PLAN REQUIRED THE MORE PROACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY ROADS SERVICE TO ENSURE PARTICIPATION AND GENUINE ENGAGE OF NORTH BELFAST RESIDENTS. THE PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERCHANGE HAS TO TAKE AN OBJECTIVE ACCOUNT OF THE IMPACT EACH OPTION MIGHT HAVE ON THE ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE NORTH BELFAST ECONOMY, LOCAL BUSINESS INTERESTS AND ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES LOCALLY, IN OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY.

A detailed Traffic and Economic assessment has been undertaken using industry standard techniques and computer models to quantify the effects of the Proposed Scheme. Detailed costs have been prepared and included in the assessment to determine the economic value of the scheme. A range of sensitivity tests has also been undertaken to examine the extent to which results from the computer models vary under different scenarios.

The method adopted for the Traffic and Economic assessment is in line with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The results of the economic assessments indicate that the Proposed Scheme represents good value for money, with an overall Net Present Value of £99.780m and a Benefit to Cost Ratio of 2.334.

The results of the various sensitivity tests indicate that the Proposed Scheme would generate a positive Net Present Value over a range of test scenarios where the overall benefits exceed the cost of the scheme. It is concluded that the Proposed Scheme would improve operating conditions in the York Street area and represents good value for money.

ROADS SERVICE NEED TO ENSURE ALTERNATIVE FORM OF TRAFFIC IS IMPLEMENT AS AN OPTION WHICH ENSURES THAT THE INTERCHANGE OFFERS PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS THE SAFEST AND MOST STRAIGHT FORWARD MEANS OF ACCESS VIA YORK STREET AND WHICH ENSURES CITYWIDE CONNECTIONS WITH BELFAST, ITS ECONOMY AND SHOPPING PRECINCTS, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE HIGH PERCENTAGE OF NON- CAR OWNERS LIVING IN AREAS OF DEPRIVATION ACROSS NORTH BELFAST. THE PROPOSAL SUGGESTED THAT YORK STREET IS REINSTATED AS A 2-

WAY TRAFFIC SYSTEM TO EASE CONGESTION AND SEEMS THE LOGICAL WAY SHOWN TO HAVE THIS RE OPENED.

Non-Motorised User Provision

The grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great George's Street. It is considered that these changes and additional improvements to each of the remaining signalised junctions, would benefit non-motorised road users through improved amenity on these routes.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped-kerbs and tactile paving.

TransportNI welcomes your support of the two-way running proposals for York Street.

With regard to cycling provision, following the statutory consultation period TransportNI has further engaged with Sustrans and DRD Cycling Unit to review provision for all non-motorised users on York Street. All aspects raised by your response have been considered in developing a revised proposal.

We enclose two drawings illustrating the revised proposal for your information. The revised proposal will be available for discussion at the upcoming Public Inquiry.

THERE ARE CONCERNS THAT THE INTERCHANGE DEVELOPMENT WILL SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE TRAFFIC FLOW AND VOLUME IN THE NORTH OF THE CITY THERE IS A NEED TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENTS AT THE INTERCHANGE DO NOT ENCOURAGE MOTORIST TO USE NORTH BELFAST AS ESCAPE ROUTE AT CLIFTON STREET AND SLIPS ROADS AND PARK AS UNREGULATED "PARKING ZONE" FOR COMMUTERS WORKING OR SHOPPING IN THE CITY. PARKING IS AN ISSUE IN NORTH BELFAST ADJACENT TO MAIN LINKS TO THE CITY FROM NORTH BELFAST THAT WILL NEED ADDRESSED AS PART OF A WIDER CONSULTATION ON THE IMPACT OF THE INTERCHANGE PROPOSALS AND NEEDS TO ENGAGE BELFAST CITY COUNCIL IN THE PROCESS.

Traffic Flows at Clifton Street

The purpose of the Proposed Scheme is to address the bottleneck on the strategic road network. Any additional trips on the local road network would continue to be influenced by operating conditions across the wider network.

The assessment of the Proposed Scheme indicates that although strategic traffic movements would improve, traffic volumes at the Clifton Street on-slip junction, Clifton Street off-slip junction and the Frederick Street/North Queen Street junction would increase in the year of opening and exceed operating capacity.

Parking Provision

As noted, parking provision in North Belfast is an issue that cannot be addressed by the Proposed Scheme and is a matter that should be raised separately with TransportNI's Traffic Management unit.

ROADS SERVICE WOULD NEED TO ENGAGE WITH OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND BODIES WHO HAVE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS PLANNED IN THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY WHICH ESPECIALLY WITH THE

NEW UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENTS WELL UNDER WAY AND THAT LAND AVAILABILITY WILL ALSO BE NOW GRABBED AND USED WHERE POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE FLATS AND UNITS TO CATER FOR STUDENTS AND NOT TO SERVE THE GREATER COMMUNITY NEED OF SOCIAL HOUSING WHICH IS IN DEMAND WILL IMPACT ON THE PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND USAGE OF THE INTERCHANGE I.E. UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER CAMPUS, YORK STREET/FREDRICK STREET - TRANSLINK TRAIN HALT RELOCATION - BELFAST RAPID TRANSIT PLANS - AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO GATEWAY PROJECTS, LIBRARY SQUARE AND CARRICK HILL (DSD) FOR NORTH BELFAST, TO MAXIMISE CONNECTIONS WITH THE LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TAKE ACCOUNT OF AREA MASTER PLANS.

Stakeholder Consultation

TransportNI confirms that it will continue to consult with key stakeholders and bodies who have strategic developments planned in the surrounding locality as part of the planning approvals process.

THE ROADS SERVICE NEED TO ENSURE WHERE POSSIBLE DEMONSTRATE HOW THE OPTIONS WILL MITIGATE THE CAUSES OF FURTHER FRACTURE AND SEVERANCE BY THE INTERCHANGE TO NORTH BELFAST, THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE AREA'S ECONOMY ,THE VIABILITY OF SURROUND COMMUNITIES. THE CURRENT WESTLINK HAS CREATED A DIVISION IN NORTH AND WEST OF THE CITY AND COMMUNITIES AS WELL AS BARREN LAND SITES WHICH ARE STILL UNDEVELOPED. THERE IS A POOR CONNECTION FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CURRENTLY TO BE DEVELOPED TO MAKE IT WALKABLE IN SAFE AND FRIENDLY WAY.

Non-Motorised User Provision

As mentioned previously, the grade separation provided by the Proposed Scheme would remove significant volumes of road traffic from the existing local streets, including York Street and Great George's Street. It is considered that these changes and additional improvements to each of the remaining signalised junctions, would benefit non-motorised road users through improved amenity on these routes.

For pedestrians, the Proposed Scheme provides full pedestrian connection along both sides of York Street with controlled crossings at appropriate points. This is an improvement from the existing layout and would provide an improvement for access for pedestrians to the City Centre. Crossing widths are also reduced at signalised junctions, through either carriageway narrowing or the use of refuge islands. All improved pedestrian routes would be suitably surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and provided with dropped-kerbs and tactile paving.

COULD ROADS SERVICE ENSURE TO HIGHLIGHT AREAS OF "PLANNING GAIN" AND "SOCIAL BENEFIT" FOR NORTH BELFAST COMMUNITIES THAT WILL RESULT FROM THE INTERCHANGE DEVELOPMENT, AS IT SEEMS MAINLY DESIGNED TO PUSH THROUGH PUT TRAFFIC TO WEST OF CITY AND THE M1 FOR BY-PASSING TRAFFIC AND OF NO LOCAL BENEFIT OTHER THAN LESS TRAFFIC JAMS, DELAYS IN CROSSING OVER FROM YORK ST AND MOTORWAY TO LINK TO ROYAL AVENUE AND CLIFTON STREET AND WEST OF CITY.

The objective of the Proposed Scheme is to remove the existing bottleneck at the York Street junction and therefore improve journey times for road users on the strategic road network.

Upon completion of the Proposed Scheme, a number of surplus land parcels have been identified, as shown on Figure 12.5 in Volume 3 of the Environmental

Statement. The layout of the Proposed Scheme has provided access to these identified land parcels. However, TransportNI has no remit to direct the proposed use of surplus land and it is considered that the Greater Clarendon Masterplan is the appropriate document to consider the future use of such land parcels.

IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS WE WOULD ALSO STRONGLY SUPPORT THE FORUM FOR ALTERNATIVE BELFAST, THEIR RESPONSE ON THE INTERCHANGE CONSULTATION AND THEIR PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION WHICH HAVE MAINLY BEEN UNDERTAKEN.

Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)

Since finalising the Proposed Scheme Report, including the Environmental Statement, TransportNI has established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) comprising representatives from a variety of government and non-government bodies, including the Forum for Alternative Belfast. The purpose of the group, amongst other things, is to review scheme aesthetics and enhance user appreciation through the improvement of its finishes and open spaces.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Brian Mullan, Antrim Road Regeneration Committee)

The Antrim Road Regeneration Committee (ARRC) submitted a wide ranging document to TNI commenting on various aspects of the proposed Scheme. In addition to expressing generalised support for the project, they also raised some concerns and made recommendations, many of which were also made by other individuals and organisations both before and during the public phase of the Inquiry.

These included:

- The impact of the Scheme on the local residential and surrounding communities.
- Better provision for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The need for better communications with local people.
- The need to engage with other stakeholders and
- Consideration of the impact of the new University campus.

Since these issues are covered elsewhere in this Report, ARRC are advised to see in particular the sections relating to;

- Sustrans (OBJ32), together with Sections 7.6 and 8.4.
- Belfast City Council (COM12)
- Section 8.2 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Adjacent Residential Areas.
- Section 8.3 - Inspectors' Recommendations - Community Liaison.

4.3.16 Comment numberCOM16
Name NIEA - Historic Monuments Unit
Date submitted..... 11 March 2015
NIMVO plot numberN/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

NIEA: HISTORIC MONUMENTS UNIT HAVE REVIEWED THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT SUBMITTED BY URS. WE ARE IN BROAD AGREEMENT WITH THE FINDINGS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES PROPOSED FOR THE FORTHCOMING DEVELOPMENT.

A comprehensive 'Detailed' Cultural Heritage assessment has been undertaken for the Proposed Scheme and reported in Chapter 9 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement.

TransportNI notes that NIEA - Historic Monuments Unit are in broad agreement with the findings and mitigation strategies proposed.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments NIEA – (Historic Monuments Unit)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

4.3.17 Comment Number COM17
Name Denise Mackle, DARD - Countryside Management Development Branch
Date submitted..... 18 March 2015
NIMVO plot number N/A

TransportNI has considered the correspondence in the above communication and responds as follows:

IN REFERENCE TO THE CONSULTATION ATTACHED, WE HAVE CONSULTED WITH OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE DEPARTMENT AND WISH TO FORWARD THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS –

FOREST SERVICE

WE HAVE CONSIDERED YOUR REQUEST REGARDING POTENTIAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE MOVEMENT OF SOIL IN THE AREA DESCRIBED ABOVE. AN EXAMINATION OF THE DEPARTMENTS RECORDS SHOW THAT NONE OF THE LANDS INVOLVED IN THE ABOVE MENTIONED PROPOSAL, AS OUTLINED IN THE PLANS SUBMITTED ARE SUBJECT TO THE TERMS OF A NOTICE RELATING TO POTATO CYST NEMATODE (PCN) OR POTATO WART DISEASE (PWD).

THERE ARE THEREFORE NO RESTRICTIONS AS FAR AS THE ORDER IS CONCERNED ON THE MOVEMENT OF SOIL OR OTHER MATERIAL FROM THESE LANDS.

A Land Use assessment has been undertaken for the Proposed Scheme and reported in Chapter 12 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement.

TransportNI notes your comments regarding Potato Cyst Nematode and Potato Wart Disease.

FISHERIES DIVISION

DARD FISHERIES HAVE NO ISSUES OR CONCERNS TO RAISE FROM AN AQUACULTURE ASPECT, BUT WE WOULD LIKE TO REMIND THE APPLICANT THAT;

IT IS AN OFFENCE UNDER ARTICLE 47 OF THE FISHERIES ACT (NI) 1966 TO CAUSE POLLUTION WHICH IS SUBSEQUENTLY SHOWN TO HAVE A DELETERIOUS EFFECT ON FISH STOCKS.

An assessment of impacts on the Water Environment has been undertaken for the Proposed Scheme and reported in Chapter 16 in Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement.

TransportNI notes your comments regarding the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966.

IF ANY FURTHER COMMENTS ARE RECEIVED, THEY WILL BE FORWARDED TO YOU.

We would thank you for your interest in this scheme.

Inspectors' Comments (Denise Mackle, DARD – Countryside Management Development Branch)

The comments set out above and the TNI responses have been noted.

Assessment of The Comments from Interested Parties

A total of 7 objections/comments were received following the closing date of 10th March 2015.

We have considered this evidence, together with the additional information provided during the three days of the Inquiry by Individuals, their Representatives, the TNI Team and the Consultants (URS). We have also taken into account the evidence we obtained during our site visits which took place both before and after the Public Inquiry held at the Spires Centre.

At the end of the section devoted to each individual and/or Agents) are the 'Inspectors' Comments' and where appropriate, 'Inspectors' Recommendations'.

In those instances where we have considered an overall comment would be appropriate these will be found in Section 7, 'Inspectors' Considerations' and Section 8, 'Inspectors' Recommendations'.

4.4.1 Interested Party Number IP60

NameMichael Little

Date submitted 10 February 2015

The correspondence from Mr Little relates to a request for a copy of the DVD containing the ES.

4.4.2 Interested Party Number IP61

Name Helm Housing

Date submitted 4 February 2015

Michael McDonnell, Chief Executive of Helm Housing wrote to TNI saying:

'York Street Interchange - Notice of intention to make Vesting Order

Thank you for your letter of 27th January 2015 confirming that the Minister has announced the draft Statutory Orders and Environmental Statement for the proposed York Street Interchange. I can confirm receipt of the formal Notice of the Department's intention to make a Vesting Order in respect of lands held by Helm Housing at Great Georges Street, Belfast ('the Lands'). As you know, we have been aware of these plans for some time.

While I appreciate that the formal vesting process may be some time off, I would welcome the opportunity for an early engagement with regard to the vesting process and the quantum of compensation that might be payable as a result of the compulsory acquisition of the Lands. I understand that the Department has instructed Land and Property Services Agency (LPS) to deal with compensation cases and it is obviously Helm's intention to engage our own property consultant to negotiate on our behalf. I am assuming that all of Helm's reasonable agent and legal fees will be met by the Department.

If my proposal for an early engagement is something that would be of benefit (potentially leading to a transfer of the Lands to the Department by

agreement and without the need for a formal Vesting Order), perhaps you could confirm how we might take this forward? I would be happy for our retained valuer (Chris Callan of CBRE) to open preliminary discussions with the relevant valuer in LPS.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely'

Inspectors' Comments (Helm Housing)

There are no comments, as this correspondence relates to compensation issues which are outside the remit of the Inquiry

4.4.3 Interested Party Number IP62
Name Brendan Callan
Date submitted 27 January 2015

Mr Callan spoke at the Inquiry on the morning of Day 3 and he began by explaining that in his estate there were a number of elderly residents who had lived there through the troubles and had different health problems, such as breathing, heart issues and nervous dispositions caused by various things.

Over the years people had complained about the noise from motorway traffic and the construction of the Cityside Shopping Centre. Many residents had to have oxygen in their homes to assist them in their breathing and to improve their quality of life. He had an uncle and aunt who had to use nebulisers because of air pollution.

Mr Callan said there was no doubt in his mind that many of the residents would face health issues as a result of the construction work to create the new road layout. They would be susceptible to further ailments due to the pollution of the environment by dust, fumes, etc. and that might even lead to the loss of life.

Children who are the future would also be affected as well as people like himself. Daily routines would be greatly impacted during the construction phase which he understood would last for three to four years.

Causes and effects of air pollution.

Mr Callan went on to say that there were different types of air pollution: fumes, vapours, gases, smoke, odours, dust and tri-particles and they could be produced in a variety of ways, such as the use of heavy construction machinery or constructions processes, particularly those that use chemicals. They all had to be certified and passed by different laws, such as 1978, Article 40 and 41.

Harmful emissions were produced during building and demolition works and by the use of vehicles during and after construction. Burning materials in the open spaces, such as tarmac was also seen as a problem.

Mr Callan pointed out that Mrs Murphy lived near the Interchange and horrible fumes were given off by all modes of transport including distribution and delivery vehicles and also during road resurfacing activities.

Effects of air pollution on the environment and human health.

Mr Callan said that air pollution impacted on the environment in a number of serious ways. The emissions of greenhouse gases contributed to climate change and ozone depletion, which everyone had been aware of with hair sprays, air fresheners, etc. Acid rain caused damage to buildings etc.

Those who are exposed to poor air quality could face an increase in the risk of developing or exacerbating a range of debilitating illnesses, including lung and breathing problems and skin conditions. Organ damage could occur due to diseases such as cancer.

The residents could have decided to oppose the scheme but had concluded that there would be no point. They had taken the decision that it would be better to go along with the proposals and see if they could achieve a better quality of life.

Mr Callan said that his uncle who lives nearby had said that TNI would be better off building a moat around them with 40 foot walls. He had replied that this was not the case but on reflection realised that they already had a 40 foot wall which was part of the Cityside Shopping Centre at the back of Henry Street. After going around the streets with Mr Megarry and taking measurements, he said he had realised that there would be a structure of considerable height in front of Monaghan Street and at the back of Little George's Street, so they were 75% of the way to having the 40 foot walls around them. He added that the comment had come from an 86 year old man who had to use nebulisers six or seven times a day because of the air quality at present. What was it going to be like during and after the construction of the proposed Scheme?

Noise control

Referring to noise Mr Callan said that you had to put up with neighbours having parties and so on, because it only lasted for a short time and nobody wanted to stop people having a good time. He added that In the troubled times the residents had helicopters going over and they kept people awake. Air pollution, noise pollution, and disruption associated with the planned construction would have an impact on their day-to-day living and the residents wanted to raise their concerns. They wanted to minimise noise, pollution and disruption rather than opposing the Scheme.

Mr Callan said that the plans were all very fine and he was not really interested in how a bridge looked. However he did not want a situation to develop where a bridge had 40 feet of water underneath after heavy rain, as had been the case elsewhere on the Westlink.

Though there had been a great deal of hassle from 1969 onwards, the situation had changed. He added that he had not been impressed with the comment that if York Street was permanently closed to pedestrians a traditional parade might have to use North Queen Street as an alternative.

With reference to an e-mail which had been addressed to him on 29th January 2015 Mr Callan said that the point he was making was that as a resident in the estate he was entitled to know what changes were being proposed. He should not be expected to have to go down to the Ramada Hotel to view the plans.

He said that he was surprised that as soon he mentioned he had a City and Guilds of London qualification, engineers had walked away. He had left a letter and when he did not receive a response had sent it again by post. He claimed not to have received a reply until early 2015. This had given him

the impression of somebody trying to hide something; had there been an ulterior motive?

Some people had alternative proposals for the Scheme but he had the impression that they had not been welcomed by TNI. It was the wrong attitude.

The comment had been made earlier in the Inquiry that work would be going on during the day and through the night and that noise levels would be minimised so as not to create a nuisance. In his estate there were quite a few paramedics and nurses who worked at night time and consideration had to be given to these people. They had a right to sleep like everybody else.

Mr Callan pointed out that he and the other residents were individuals without a team behind them. They were operating in good faith to improve the quality of their lives. He hoped that nobody was being disingenuous. What was the big secret? Show the plans? Take on the concerns of the people and give everyone a better quality of life.

Mr Callan pointed out that because of the vegetation behind the houses on Little George's Street, many people had been unable to plant vegetables because there was not enough light. Instead patio slabs had been laid.

With reference to the SAG and other Groups, Mr Callan wanted to know why the residents were not represented. He suggested if they had been, then their concerns might have been taken on board earlier and this could have removed the need for the Inquiry.

Responding to the suggestion by the Inspector that this might be an appropriate point at which to hear some responses from TNI, Mr McGuinness said he had identified five points in Mr Callan's statement - noise, air quality, construction matters, daylight and consultation.

With regard to consultation Mr McGuinness understood that there been at least one leaflet or letter drop in the area which provided information to residents about the Scheme.

TNI had decided to book the Ramada Hotel in Talbot Street as it was considered to be the closest hotel to the residents. It was also in a central location designed to suit not just the residents but everyone else who had an interest in the project.

Mr Callan replied that he and 40 other people on the estate would claim not to have received the leaflets about the Scheme and he added that he was meticulous about paperwork.

Mr Megarry said that there had been two public consultation events, one in 2011 and the second in February 2015. The TNI approach had been to publicise the Scheme as widely as possible, and they had done that in a number of ways. Adverts had been placed in the major local newspapers and information was also available on the website. Correspondence had been sent to both key stakeholders and others and in addition, some 30,000 leaflets had been distributed in two separate drops in the relevant BT postcode areas that encapsulated the York Street footprint.

With reference to Little George's Street, URS staff members hand delivered copies of the flyers to the houses in both 2011 and 2015 in connection with the public information events. Mr Megarry said that the flyers has been hand delivered as they wanted to ensure that we were not just relying on the postal service.

Mr Spiers added that Scheme boards were also erected in Cityside Retail Park for a period of two weeks to make sure that the information could be seen within the area. The boards had also included TNI contact details for anyone to use.

Mr O'Neill responded that there was a difference between consultation and engagement. He said that there was absolutely no doubt that leaflets had been sent out, events held in the Ramada Hotel and so on but the point was that a properly structured long term engagement was required and not just a couple of one off events. Much of the language in the leaflets had been technical in nature and people had not fully understood it. It needed to be explained.

He added that TNI were not on their own in this as the University of Ulster had also claimed that they had consulted widely but had not engaged in the way required by the local community.

Referring to the former Girwood Army Barracks where a community hub was built, Belfast City Council had established a Community Forum which has been working for a number of years. As a result there was an ongoing process where problems could be identified in advance and solutions found. In other words, problems could be addressed before they actually arose.

What the residents were asking for was not just consultation but structured engagement to give people the opportunity to fully understand the proposals and to express their opinions. In the end they wanted to feel that had been listened to, and that they were not simply viewed as whingers and complainers. There were several ongoing projects around the area with loads of consultation but very little engagement.

Mr Callan wondered what type of opposition there would be if the Scheme was in another area of the City such as Stranmillis. The people who had spoken at the Inquiry were just a group of individuals representing the local community. His name had been put forward as he wanted to defend the rights of people. He added that he was a member of Trades Unions and was also being proposed for a Health and Safety award in the week following the Inquiry.

The residents were not going to just roll over. They had tried to add their views and concerns about the Scheme. If they were to be taken on board it would be beneficial to both TNI and the local people.

The Inspector said that he thought that this would be an appropriate time to mention that having looked at the drawings for the Scheme both he and the Assistant Inspector had thought that it might be possible to move the alignment of the carriageways slightly to the south in order to reduce the impact on Little George's Street.

He had asked Mr Spiers to look at this possibility on Day 2 of the Inquiry and did not expect an immediate answer. He wanted the request to be on the public record, and was looking for a considered response. There would be inevitable consequences of such an adjustment and what these might be remained to be seen

In conclusion Mr Callan said that as the last speaker representing the residents he was aware that he had referred to various issues that had already been raised by other speakers earlier in the Inquiry. He had done this quite deliberately to emphasise the various points and to ensure that they were taken on board.

Inspectors' Comments (Brendan Callan)

See Section 7.5 - Inspectors' Considerations – Impact of the Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas

Inspectors' Recommendations (Brendan Callan)

See Section 8.2 – Inspectors' Recommendations – Impact of the Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas.

4.4.4 Interested Party Number IP63

Name Quintin Oliver

Date submitted 27 January 2015

Quintin Oliver wrote to TNI in his capacity as Chair of The Consultation Institute, requesting a copy of the TNI Consultation Project Plan, outlining:

- 'Your background research
- Pre-consultation, if any, and with whom
- Stakeholder mapping, if any
- 'Key' stakeholder identification, if any, with rationale
- Option appraisal
- Budget
- Dialogue method choices
- Approach to 'seldom heard groups'
- Monitoring methods
- Data collection processes
- Reporting mechanisms
- Feedback and feed-forward plans
- Publication of responses
- Output plans and outcome reporting.'

On 5 February 2015 Colin Pentland (TNI) replied as follows:

'Thank you for your email of 29 January 2015 regarding the consultation process used by DRD. I can confirm the project operates in line with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges in terms of scheme development and assessments. The Consultation process and outcomes is covered in Chapter 6 of the Environmental Statement for the York Street Interchange and the associated appendices. The full Environmental Statement is published on the scheme website and I have attached links to the relevant chapter and appendices for your convenience.

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/ysi_es_vol_1_part11.pdf

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/ysi_es_vol_2_app_6_consultation.pdf

Inspectors' Comments (Quintin Oliver)

The points contained within the query from Mr Oliver and the TNI response have been noted.

4.4.5 Interested Party Number IP64

Name John Wright (Green Action)

Date first submitted 01/02 June 2011

Inspectors' Comments (John Wright)

Mr Wright made a lengthy presentation at the very end of Day 2 of the Inquiry.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of what he had to say referred to issues which were not within the scope of the Inquiry such as Government Transport Policy, the use of park-and-ride facilities, Belfast City Airport, the proposed A5 Scheme, the closure of local railways, the cost of a car dependent society, the cost of congestion, better public transport facilities, etc. This being the case most of the detail which was presented has not been recorded in this Report.

However, when commenting on the Scheme he suggested that communications with property owners and others could have been better and comments and recommendations on this point are to be found in Sections 7 and 8 of this document.

Mr Wright proposed that rather than having a very high cost free flow, expensive Interchange TNI should have been looking at a lower cost alternative, particularly since we were living in very economically constrained times.

He proposed an at-grade solution which would control traffic speed to 40mph on the Westlink using the existing gantries, so that by the time it reached York Street it would not have to stop at all. There was also the possibility of constructing a low cost bridge, very much like the proposed York Street Bridge and that would be a way of removing the need for traffic signals. However, Mr Wright was of the opinion that low cost alternatives were not being treated seriously by the Department..

He suggested that a speed limit would add to the safety and furthermore freight should be prioritised to reach the Harbour

Responding on behalf of TNI, Mr McGuinness said they did not accept what had been suggested by Mr Wright in relation to gantries and speeds. He added that the Department was taking forward a robust, sustainable and appropriate transport policy and added that in any event, policy considerations were not within the scope of this particular Inquiry.

4.4.6 Interested Party Number IP65

Name Jeff Rutherford

Date submitted October 2015

No written evidence provided.

4.4.7 Interested Party Number IP66

Name Brenda Murphy

Date submitted October 2015

Mrs Brenda Murphy spoke at the Inquiry during the afternoon of Day 1 and she was accompanied at the table by Mr Mark Hackett.

She began by explaining that she was a Resident of Little George's Street, having moved from Upper Meadow Street when the houses there were due for redevelopment. Her home had been owned by the Housing Executive before being bought by Mrs Murphy some 12 or 13 years ago. At present she was fearful about the house if the Scheme was to go ahead.

The property was subject to vibration and noise from the adjacent road already and she also expressed concern about air quality. She said she knew that there were at least 20 monitoring stations in and around the area but since there were only two at the Little George's Street houses, then the readings could not be accurate. Pollution and everything else in the air came from the motorway and TNI was proposing to bring the road and the bank closer to her home which was located at the top end of the street.

The trees at the back of the houses were to be removed to facilitate the new road and these provided screening at present. Natural sunlight came in at the back of the houses and if the trees were to be removed, then all the pollution would come right through.

Mrs Murphy said that it was OK for people to say that the motorway would be a bit further away but her three year old grandson was petrified that a lorry was going to fall off the motorway on top of him. She added that anyone was welcome to come to her home to see how they lived at present, without the road coming any closer.

Vibration was bad at night even before all the work which would be necessary to make the new road. In her street there were people who worked night shifts and slept during the day. How were they going to sleep when the construction was being carried out? Nobody seemed to care about the residents.

The new bank was going to be very dominant, visually very imposing. Privacy at the rear of the properties was going to be affected and the existing trees would be replaced with small plants which would not take up all the pollution from the vehicles.

The backs of the houses were the only places where there was privacy and now people in lorries would be looking in. Mrs Murphy explained that her son had a bedroom at the back of the house, so how was he supposed to look out and live in that room with all the noise going on?

There was a constant problem with litter coming down the bank from the motorway and the new road would be higher and closer to at least six of the houses. This would reduce the amount of sunlight. In the winter the trees let sunlight through but still provide screening and this natural screen could not be replaced.

There was concern in the area about an increase in pollution and this had been made worse when people heard about the problems with Volkswagen. Residents were constantly sick and both children and adults suffered from asthma.

Mrs Murphy was concerned that nobody was coming to see them to find out what they thought about the prospect of the motorway coming closer. The sale of the house next door had fallen through because of the Scheme and she believed she would be unable to sell her own home now.

The residents had been in discussions with local Universities about checking air quality and if readings taken at the houses indicated that they were not up to standard, then legal action could be taken up to five years after the completion of the Scheme.

Mrs Murphy said that she knew that the right to light had never been tested in Northern Ireland and she understood that it was not a planning or daylight issue. The natural sunlight comes from the south, so would the residents simply have to accept that their sunlight would be totally blocked and nobody seems to care.

A local solicitor had been consulted and if necessary legal action would be taken.

Responding on behalf of TNI, Mr McGuinness suggested that Mrs Murphy's objection could be broken down into a number of parts; right to light, vibration, noise issues, air quality, road construction impacts and finally the change in the geometry of the bank at the back of the houses.

Having said that there was no legal right to direct sunlight there was a right to light, Mr McGuinness then introduced Dr Foroutan Parand who had overall responsibility for the Daylight Assessment.

Dr Parand explained that he was a mechanical engineer with a PhD in solar and physics. In addition he was the Technical Director of URS leading a team of physicists and previously he had been with BRE. Numerous studies of this kind of had been carried out in the last 10 years during his time with URS.

The guidelines used in assessing the impact of the Scheme on the access to daylight in relation to the houses on North Queen Street, Little George's Street and Molyneaux Street were mainly those used by BRE. These guidelines were normally used by Local Authorities to assess the impact of a development on existing neighbouring buildings.

The BRE guidelines proposed three methods of assessing daylight on the surface of a wall and inside a room, the first being the 'visible sky angle'.

This is the angle at which you can see the sky and it is a measure from the centre of a window. A horizontal line is drawn perpendicular to the vertical wall containing the window. A line is then drawn from that to the top of the obstruction outside. This creates an angle, and if that angle is below 25 degrees, that leaves about 65 degrees of the sky that can be seen. This is the visible sky angle. If the obstruction is higher, then the visible sky angle will be smaller and less daylight will be available from the sky.

This test is normally done on an obstruction which is continuous at the same height but in the case of Little Georges Street there is a sloping obstruction, so a second method called the 'vertical sky component' was employed.

The vertical sky component (VSC) is the amount of light that comes through a vertical wall from the sky. It is related to the visible sky angle and it can provide an average measurement of a visible sky angle and that will

determine the amount of natural daylight available. The VSC is the measure that is normally used within the UK for assessing the amount of daylight from the sky.

The VSC is the ratio of the amount of light that comes through the vertical wall, or in Mrs Murphy's case it is the ratio between the amount of light that comes to the centre of her back window over the amount of light that comes to the top of her roof

Expressed in a different way, the VSC is the ratio between the amount of light reaching a point on a vertical wall or window to an unobstructed horizontal plane. Normally the maximum would be 40%, which would mean that all the light that the sky can provide was available.

Dr. Parand went on to explain that what is actually measured is called the 'CIE Sky' and it has nothing to do with sunlight. It is the amount of light available under an overcast sky and it is an international standard that defines an overcast sky all over the world. So, the CIE Sky is measured on a horizontal roof without any obstruction and compared with the light on a vertical wall and this comparison provides a ratio.

The guidelines recommend a 27% VSC, meaning that if this can be either achieved or exceeded, sufficient daylight will reach the vertical wall and the impact will not be significant or adverse.

The guidelines suggest that if the VSC is below 27% this does not necessarily mean that there would not be enough light inside the building. Further details are required about the sizes of both the window and the rooms behind that window.

This leads to the calculation of a factor which is called 'Average Daylight Factor'. The British Standard and the BRE guidelines suggest that it should be the same ratio as the VSC but it is measured on a working plane inside the room. In the explanation set out above, the VSC was measured on a point on a vertical wall. This time the daylight factor is actually a ratio of the amount of light available from the sky on a desk which has an 850 millimeter height from the floor. It is a different ratio but using the same light standard.

The BSI Standard (which the BRE guidelines also recommend) for bedrooms is normally 1% and for living rooms 1.5%. This means that if the calculation indicates the 'Average Daylight Factor' (ADF) of 1.5%, then it can be assumed that the room has sufficient daylight.

Moving on to the 'Right to Light' Dr. Parand explained that it was a slightly different but similar concept, but nevertheless a legal right.

It had been developed in the 1920s by a man called Waldram, which is why it was sometimes referred to as the 'Waldram Method'. The simple name for it is the '50/50 rule'.

The amount of light Waldram proposed (and it was accepted and has been commonly used since then in the courts) suggests that you need one lumen, which is a unit of light, to be able to distinguish any work that you do inside the room. He also calculated that outside on a horizontal unobstructed plane you will get 500 lumens. The ratio of what is available on a working plane 850 millimetres high inside the room to that of an unobstructed horizontal plane on the roof is called the 'Sky Factor'. 0.2%, which is a ratio of one lumen over 500 lumens, means that there is enough light to do work, and DR. Parand said that any room that needs to be useable has to have at least 50% of the floor area at that level. This is why

it is called 50/50 rule.

A calculation was made before and after a development takes place. Obviously the nature of the development will affect this but the criterion will have been satisfied if 50% or more is still achieved.

Dr. Parand confirmed that URS had built a detailed model using the Radius Model of IES and simulating software, and that it was one of the leading software packages for lighting and daylight. 3D models were also created from the calculations.

Geometrical data had also been supplied in the form of drawings from the URS design team, including 3D CAD models and section drawings for each affected property.

Detailed internal assessments were made at numbers 1, 3, 11 and 17, Little George's Street to identify the most significant middle effect and the lesser significant.

Mr Hackett intervened to say that if there was a legal Right to Light case the residents will fight the matter out in court. The question was, did the assessment say that the Right to Light criteria would not be infringed?

Mr Hackett added that the residents had not been furnished with the report even though Mr Megarry thought it had been circulated. Mr Megarry confirmed that it had been finalised in the last few months and could be viewed on the publicly available website.

Pressed by the Inspector to move the light issue to a conclusion, Dr Parand said that the Sky Factor had been calculated for a number of properties in Little George's Street as follows:-

Following completion of the scheme:-

No.1 would have 95% of the room lit to the Waldram level of 0.2%.

No.3 would achieve 91%.

No.11 would achieve 92%

No.17 would achieve 94%.

Dr. Parand concluded by saying that all the properties listed above would be well over the 50% minimum defined by Waldram and in comparative terms they would be only about between 2% to 4% worse off than at present. In almost all cases the light levels would be improved with the removal of the trees.

Introducing the discussion on air quality. Dr Garry Gray said that historically, the air quality in Little George's Street had concentrations of particulate matters which had been above the limits the European Union had set for the protection of human health. This was the PM10 size fraction, which is the fraction that people can breathe into their lungs and exhale again, plus nitrogen dioxide. Whilst that was still the case for nitrogen dioxide it was no longer the case for particulate matter because the concentrations across the City had decreased to the point where the standards have now been met.

There were many monitoring stations in the York Street part of the city, operated by the City Council and they are a long-term continuous measurement of nitrogen dioxide concentrations. The gas is collected onto a surface within a plastic tube and then sent to a laboratory for chemical testing. The results show values that are currently above the 40 microgramme per cubic metre limit, and some of the tube locations were

between the road and the houses.

Because of the need to deal with the future, the assessment was based on a model. This takes into account a year of hourly meteorological conditions, which amounts to approximately 8,760 sets of readings. That had allowed URS to calibrate the performance of the predictions which is why it was able to be calculated at the individual properties.

URS had found that in the current situation there were still exceedences of this limit value, and in addition there will be fundamental changes to future emission rates for vehicles incorporating different technologies and engine specifications. By 2021, the proposed year of opening, the standard of air quality in that area of the city will have improved considerably to the point where the air quality limit values will have been met and it will continue to improve further by the design year.

The second point made by Dr Gray was in relation to whether foliage was good at screening NOx or any other particulates, an issue which had been raised by Mr Hackett.

There were two parts to the answer. The first one was the need to distinguish between the oxide, the nitrogen dioxide which is a gas, and the particulate matter which is a solid suspended in the air. A fairly large particle suspended in the air does not travel very far before it deposits out, so something like snow or sand does not go very far before it lands. The size of the particles that make up the PM10 are so small that some of the emissions from Belfast will be measurable on the eastern side of Europe. Their pollution goes to China, China goes to the States, the States passes the pollution back to Europe. This was not something that easily deposits out of the air. It was gas-like but it does not behave in quite the same way.

Vegetation exchanges gases with the atmosphere, through little holes in the leaves called stomata and particles will pass into the leaves and become deposited. So, a very small amount of particulate matter is extracted from the air, but it doesn't work like a vacuum cleaner or some other efficient means of filtration. What happens in practice is the air blows around the leaves, around the twigs and branches as if they are not really there. So there is no practical benefit to a screen of deciduous plants in terms of reducing air pollution.

The comments that Ben Barrett was making was that when Councils are putting out those little plastic tubes they need to be mindful of what obstruction there is between the point of measurement and the point that they are trying to represent. Most people would think that if there is a big solid wall there, the measurement should be made on the correct side of the wall. They don't always pay attention to the vegetation. If you have a very dense type hedge, something like yew or holly, then that forms some sort of barrier to the air flow and the air is forced to go over it or around it, and that will change the levels of concentrations immediately next to the barrier within a matter of a couple of metres. Beyond that the turbulence means that you are back to similar concentrations. If you have a very open tree like a birch that is no barrier at all, and therefore it makes no difference.

Mrs Murphy intervened to ask if Dr Gray was saying that the trees were not needed there but TNI want to take them away, to cut them completely back. Were the residents supposed to live with people looking in to their properties? If the trees were removed, what quality of life would the people have? She added that residents have had to move, one in particular, her sister, had to move from Belfast to Craigavon because living beside the

motorway caused her health to be really bad. If the trees were cut away where does that leave us?

Mr McGuinness asked Dr Gray if the trees that were there at present form a substantial or significant barrier.

Dr Gray replied that if it was a yew or a more dense material they would form an initial barrier to the air movement but they wouldn't change the concentration by the time it reached the house. The existing hedge and trees made no difference. If it was there or wasn't there the concentration at the facade of the house as it currently stands would still be above the limit value.

Responding to a question from the Inspector about the broader implications of bringing the carriageway one car width closer to the houses, Mr Gray replied that the big issue in terms of the exposure of the residents to air quality was the existing concentrations from all the sources within the city and the surrounding area. At the moment they are over specified limits but the Council was working to achieve acceptable standards, which was good. The change to the carriageway would make no significant difference. It would be a fractional decimal places of a microgram per cubic metre.

A short exchange took place between Mr McGuinness and Mr Hackett concerning specific evidence which had been sent to Mr Hackett by Mr Ben Barrett. Mr McGuinness was of the opinion that it was incorrect for evidence from a third party to be given when the third party was not present.

Mrs Murphy intervened to say that only for Mark Hackett the residents would have been totally lost. They did not have the financial backings of TNI to be able to do all this. She made the point that she was just an ordinary person like everybody else in her community. They didn't have Solicitors or other support. She said she had been in contact with a Solicitor and was trying to do it through a friend so that they were not going to be charged a great deal of money, because she knew at the end it was going to have to go to court.

Mr Hackett continued saying that there was something said that made him think that TNI was interpreting the comment in relation to measurement. He went on to say that the comment was an extract of an e-mail after sight of the section drawings that he had shown earlier in the Inquiry today. Something in what had been said had made him think that the comment related to bushes being a barrier to measurement. He claimed that this was not what he had been referring to. He was definitely referring to the drawing, and a written submission could be made if necessary. TNI may not have been aware that the quote was from an e-mail sent to Mr Hackett in relation to his sending a query to Ben Barrett who had only reviewed the drawings etc. on the internet. He could not be at the Inquiry in person because of attending a conference.

He went on to say that they were looking for pro bono help from other technical assistants.

Mrs Murphy said that the residents had asked several times for the trees behind their homes to be cut back, only to be told by Road Service that they have to be there to protect you; they are there for your health. How many years was it going to take for small bushes to grow to provide protection for the community?

Mr Hackett said that he had made a written submission on a number of occasions saying in his view what hasn't happened was that URS have

lined up every technical consultant on the book, but without an Architect. He made the point that the Scheme needed to have an architectural, holistic viewpoint on vibration, air, light and planning amenity, without getting down into technical detail. A Planner had looked at the proposals and said that the Scheme would not achieve planning permission.

The Scheme needed to be looked at it in the round thinking about for example gaps between windows, as these houses were quite old. He claimed that there was a moral responsibility for an Architect or Planner to write a holistic report, putting together all the data with the relevant code of conduct in mind.

Mr Hackett claimed to have read the code of conduct very carefully and had quoted it to URS in a letter. He said he was very clear that Architects and Planners also had very strong responsibilities to third parties. So if he was getting paid by TNI to do something as an Architect, he had to do it with his own code of conduct to the fore, together with his duties to third parties.

Mr Hackett said that if he was an engineer, or designing a project, he would go to the relevant set of professionals and ask if it was a good idea, This was not done, and he believed that it was because URS and TNI simply could not get an Architect who would breach his code of conduct by recommending that what was proposed in the Scheme was a good idea. He added that you could not get any credible Planner to confirm that this scheme was even adequate. Such a project should bring benefits and TNI should be seeking to enhance the situation here.

Mr McGuinness replied that URS had landscape architects who had been involved in the project. All of those people were subject to their own professional code of conduct in the same way as Mr Hackett. Mr McGuinness claimed that Mr Hackett was effectively calling into question their professional ethics and Mr Hackett responded that everyone had different codes of conduct.

Mrs Murphy claimed that nobody had come to speak to the residents and ask them what they thought about the road coming closer to the houses. She said that if you came to stay with her you would find that the whole house vibrates.

Mr Megarry responded saying that he thought Mrs Murphy would acknowledge that in recent months they had met together with the residents on a number of occasions and had attempted to communicate more clearly and more pragmatically about the nature of the scheme. So efforts had been made in that regard.

He added that with reference to the treatment of the reinforced slope, there was a proposal included within the Stage 3 Assessment which showed a quite modest level of planting; simply a hedge to the back, but he was sure that the views of the residents could be taken on board.

TNI had held two public events, one in 2011 and one in 2015, and there were mixed messages from the people he had spoken to. Some of the residents were clear that they enjoyed the benefit of the existing planting and some others would like it to be removed.

The TNI Team had also had the thought that if the reinforced slope was to be landscaped would it be maintained. They wanted to ensure that people weren't looking out onto something that was horrendous, that perhaps it could be softened in a more natural way. The option to landscape was there and TNI would listen to the residents.

Mrs Murphy remarked that she had been at both of the meetings and had asked why people from Dundonald were having a say on what the design was going to be, rather than the residents. Also, many of the residents in the street were pensioners, who were unable to make their way down to a hotel. The plans were not brought down to the local Centre where more people could have been able to attend.

Mr John Wright from Green Action concluded the session by saying that the reduction in PM10 was largely due to the lack of coherence in Belfast at the present time. PM2.5s were the carcinogens that were on rapid increase and to the shame of Belfast they were not being measured where they were occurring. The only one place where PM2.5 levels were being measured was at Lombard Street in the pedestrian area.

Following the contribution by Mrs Bernie Caughey at the Inquiry, towards the end of Day 1, Mr McGuinness said that there was one issue he wanted to deal with, before finishing.

He pointed out that Ms Una Somerville, a Planning Expert was present and that Mr Hackett had called into question the bona fides of the TNI expert. He added that Ms Somerville was part of the side team working on the design at Little George's Street and what was submitted was effectively a judgment call between professional planners.

His second point was that Ms Somerville was subject to the Royal Institute of Town Planners Code of Conduct and that meant that regardless of who she worked for she had to give her professional opinion. Mr McGuinness added that Ms Somerville was a former Chair of the Royal Institute of Town Planners in Northern Ireland and also a member of their National Council.

Mr Hackett replied that he had not been questioning anyone's professional code of ethics and that what he had said was that TNI were 'salami-slicing' the issue into different disciplines. He added that he did not think that Ms Somerville had been working on the Scheme about two years ago when the particular issue was being designed. Mr Hackett said he knew that the side meeting had taken a broad look at the planning context, but he did not think that Ms Somerville had provided solutions at a larger urban level. She wasn't working in an urban design mode, she was giving a planning context to the overall scheme.

Mr Hackett wanted to know if Ms Somerville had been asked to give a detailed Planning Report from the point of view of dominance, amenity, the normal planning issues, the PPSs and so on. Given that the scheme did not have to meet planning requirements, had she been asked to write a specific report bringing her experience to bear or, was she not involved in the early stages?

Ms Somerville replied that she was happy to answer that. She said she had joined URS in June 2014, so had only been involved since that time. The side group had been set up some considerable time after she had joined and those matters were fully debated and discussed. The point that she had been making through Mr McGuinness was that these matters were clearly ones of judgment. There had been very real concerns expressed by the residents and that was fully acknowledged. This had been and remained a very important issue and one that had been given due consideration.

From the perspective of the discussions within the side group, she had

given it her fullest consideration, having looked at the policy and the issues pertaining to right to light etc. So her views in the side meeting had been different from those of the representative from the Planning Department. It had been a difficult call, but it was one where the test in essence was would there be significant diminution.

Ms Somerville said that unfortunately it was not a greenfield site. It was a very difficult situation where there is existing superstructure which would have to be altered. It was a retro fit, so consideration had to be given to all the constraints pertaining to that. Her professional view was that there would be an impact and the EIS has referred to that, but it was not so significantly damning that it should prevent the scheme from going ahead.

Mr Hackett replied that Ms Somerville had mentioned Landscape Architects. He added that he was fully familiar with what the profession of landscape architecture entails on many different levels, but had URS actually consulted an Architect in their team to ask if what they were doing was right? Had they examined all the issues that Mr Hackett had raised in his letter which included, sound, vibration, etc.? Had an holistic view been taken? He reaffirmed his view that what had been done was to salami slice all the decisions into different disciplines and specialisms, and did not think that Ms Somerville had given that consideration in the side meeting as it had been a very short conversation in terms of what had been presented.

Ms Somerville responded that she thought there had been a fairly detailed discussion at that particular meeting, but her view was different from the Planner that was part of the side group.

She added that it was a multi-disciplinary team and the Landscape Team had a great deal of involvement. The Director of Landscape Architecture from URS was present to answer any questions on landscaping if necessary and the EIS had a very detailed section on landscape and visual impact. From the URS perspective it has been considered in an integrated holistic manner.

Mr Callan stood up to say that he was a resident. He worked with the Child Support Agency and he was speaking for both himself and his colleagues. He had seen 78 signatures of people present in the room and he believed that the majority were against the residents. Referring to TNI he said that they had referred to 'our Counsel' and he wanted to know why the residents had not been provided with legal representation

Mr Heron said that this could all be avoided and everybody was saying look at the TNI Team in the room, they don't live near the construction but when it comes to the people who live in the middle of it they were 'whitewashed'. The residents have had to give up their time to come and suit the members of the well paid TNI Team.

Mrs Murphy wanted to know if their houses were now devalued and since not selling, what were the residents of most of the top end of Little George's Street to do with them. Mr Callan added that people may have to leave their homes and that was why they were here. It was why the residents were at the Inquiry - for their lives, for where they lived

Mr McGuinness replied that there was a right to compensation under Part 2 claims for compulsory acquisition and Mrs Murphy asked if that would be paid.

The Inspector reminded Mrs Murphy that he had said in his introductory comments the same day that compensation issues could not be considered

at the Inquiry as that was not part of their brief. This was a matter that should be taken up with Land and Property Services.

As the time available to take further evidence on the afternoon of Day 1 had expired, the Inspector said that he did not want to have created a situation where someone in the room wanted to say something and had been prevented from doing so due to the lack of time. He invited anyone who had been unable to make their points and who was unable to attend later in the Inquiry to provide him with a written note containing details of their issue for further consideration.

Inspectors' Comments (Brenda Murphy)

See Section 7.5 - Inspectors' Considerations – Impact of the Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas.

Inspectors' Recommendations (Brenda Murphy)

See Section 8.2 – Inspectors' Recommendations – Impact of the Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas.

4.4.8 Interested Party Number IP67

Name Nigel Smyth (CBI Northern Ireland)

Date first submitted 28 May 2008

Mr Seamus Nigel Smyth, Director, CBI Northern Ireland read a prepared statement at the end of the morning session on the first day of the Inquiry. The content of this is recorded below in full, with minor editorial adjustments.

'Good afternoon – my name is Nigel Smyth and I am the Director of CBI Northern Ireland. I welcome this opportunity to give evidence to this Inquiry on this strategically important infrastructure project.

Across the UK, the CBI speaks on behalf of 190,000 businesses of all sizes and sectors which together employ nearly 7 million people, about one third of the private sector-employed workforce. With offices in the UK as well as representation in Brussels, Washington, Beijing and Delhi, the CBI communicates the British business voice around the world. **Our mission is to promote the conditions in which businesses of all sizes and sectors in the UK can compete and prosper for the benefit of all.**

The CBI in Northern Ireland represents around one third of the private sector workforce, and more than 60% of the largest employers in Northern Ireland. It is the leading business organisation influencing the policies of the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly.

Today I would like to highlight the support that CBI members have for this project and highlight:

- a. strategic importance of the York Gate Interchange to the Northern Ireland economy
- b. the key benefits and
- c. Other trends which support the need to invest in this project

Increasing globalisation and competition means that effective and efficient transportation infrastructure are a critical requirement to enable businesses in Northern Ireland to compete. The York Gate Interchange is a key part of the strategic road network, reflected in the fact that around 100,000 vehicles use this junction on a daily basis, and the congestion associated with the current junction layout is the most significant in Northern Ireland. While we recognise that significant improvements are necessary to other key parts of the strategic road network, notably the A6 and A5 this interchange is clearly the top priority. The importance of investing in improving Northern Ireland's infrastructure is identified as a key priority in our recently launched Business Manifesto '**Punching Above our Weight**' – this project is identified as a key priority within this document which sets out businesses priorities for the next five years.

The importance of this junction cannot be underestimated:

- a. It forms a key part of the strategic road network as reflected in the Regional Transportation Strategy and part of the Trans-European transport network
- b. It provides key access to the Port of Belfast – and also to Larne for traffic coming from the south – it is a key junction within the eastern seaboard which will enable high quality and high capacity transport linkages between Dublin and Belfast and onwards
- c. The majority of traffic passing through the existing York Street junction is strategic traffic travelling between the Westlink and the M2 and M3 Motorways – the junction facilitates traffic flow in and around Belfast
- d. The route is of critical importance to industry and commerce: Heavy Goods Vehicles make up around 9.8% of the traffic volumes while other commercial vehicles make up 11.8% of daily traffic flows
- e. The Junction is adjacent to key logistics and distribution centres, particular in the Harbour Estate to the north
- f. The junction is a key part of the all-island infrastructure – and the improvements will be of benefit to businesses and individuals from across the island wishing to access the Port of Belfast, or George Best Belfast City Airport
- g. Northern Ireland's continued economic growth will depend largely on growing our exports and increasing our tourism market - the completion of the York Gate Interchange will facilitate the growth of both these sectors. And while export growth in recent years has been subdued, there has been substantial growth in the sales of manufactured goods to Great Britain and strong growth in tourist numbers, putting Northern Ireland on track to double tourism revenues by 2020.

Since the early 1990s the Westlink has been identified as the most serious bottleneck and congestion point on the Strategic Road Network by CBI members. Since the junction improvements in the mid noughties at Grosvenor Road and Broadway the outstanding problem, where we do not have free-flowing traffic, is at the York Gate Interchange. The completion of this junction with grade-separated junctions, as proposed, will alleviate the congestion by significantly increasing the capacity of this junction. Congestion at this junction is not just confined to peak traffic periods. As we have previously highlight **the goal must be to achieve free flowing traffic**.

The route currently carries much in excess of its designed capacity. Traffic flows have increased fairly consistently over many years, albeit they were impacted by the economic downturn in 2007/8. In recent years the traffic flows on the Westlink have shown a continual increase, with growth of around 20% in traffic volumes between 2008 and 2013. With the economic recovery firmly entrenched we

believe further growth in traffic volumes is almost certain, and without the junction improvements being proposed the congestion levels will increase to unacceptable levels, undermining the competitiveness of business and the attractiveness of Belfast as an investment location. It is estimated that over 50% of the volumes of freight handled by the Port of Belfast come through this junction. At the George Best Belfast City Airport around two thirds of passenger journeys to/from the airport are along the Sydenham Bypass from the Belfast direction. Access to Belfast International Airport will also be enhanced for passengers travelling from south, west and east Belfast and their surrounds.

Congestion leads to uncertainties with regards to journey planning and unnecessary and unplanned delays, disrupting business activities and adding to costs, while also impacting on the quality of service distribution companies can provide. With continued pressure to deliver 'just in time' it is essential that congestion levels are addressed.

Indeed with the opportunity to reduce Corporation Tax to 12.5% now within the grasp of the Northern Ireland Executive this is likely to significantly increase economic activity, especially around Belfast. Latest assessments suggest that by 2033 a lower Corporation Tax rate will deliver:

- a. An additional 35,000 jobs – many of these jobs are likely to be in high value business services and be attracted to Belfast
- b. An increase of around 10% in economic output.

While there is a need to secure a modal shift to public transport, which I will return to shortly, the prospects of moving freight onto rail are not feasible in Northern Ireland. The small size of the Province and short journey times combined with ongoing supply chain management improvements, often leading to shorter delivery times, and of course the re-handling costs associated with rail freight rule out an economically feasible rail freight service. Indeed growth in our agri-food industries requires a need for reliable and predictable journey times, particular as many food producers are selling product into the Great Britain market and need to access Northern Ireland's ports. Having a high quality road system is an essential element of supporting the continuing growth of the agri-food industry.

We accept the need to improve public transport at the same time and seek to secure a modal shift into public transport. Development of park and ride schemes have been strongly supported by CBI while we also believe that proposed Belfast Transport Hub is a key project in helping to achieve this goal. However investments in these projects, as well as Belfast Rapid Transit, do not take away from the need to address the current capacity restrictions at the York Gate Interchange. Improving public transport is essential if sustainable economic growth is to be achieved and an efficient labour market developed, and is essential in addressing social cohesion and assisting labour market mobility.

Reducing congestion will bring significant environmental advantages. Under free-flowing traffic conditions HGVs produce lower emissions over a specific distance compared to when they operate in a congested and stop/go fashion, which is less efficient and involves additional acceleration and breaking. Typically a HGV will use three times the amount of fuel when driving in congested (stop/start) traffic compared to free flowing traffic. Nitrogen Dioxide will reduce by 60% if you can improve the average speed of 4 mph in congested mode to 35mph in free flow mode.

Economic growth in the future is likely to be more concentrated in cities, and without a successful and prosperous capital city of Belfast it is difficult to see how the Northern Ireland economy will be transformed. Improving the infrastructure around Belfast is essential to enable the growth of the city and to ensure its

ongoing competitiveness and attractiveness. Significant growth in Belfast will also spill over into the two main transport corridors along the M2 and the M1. Investment in public transport services along the key commuter routes of the M1 and M2 in recent years has also seen an increase in passenger volumes.

We recognise that investment in our transport infrastructure also requires more investment in traffic management – a comprehensive package of measures are likely to be required in the future to meet the increasing demands expected on the strategic roads which lead into the Westlink and York Gate Interchange, and to ensure the strategic benefits of the investment in this project are sustained.

A wide range of measures will need to be considered including:

- a. Greater use of technology including variable message signs
- b. Consideration of the development of access controls or ‘ramp metering’ at key junctions at peak periods
- c. Serious consideration of the introduction of ‘no-car’ lanes or restrictions on cars with sole occupants
- d. Additional investment in public transport, including park and ride facilities, Belfast Rapid Transit and the Belfast Transport Hub, along with other measures to encourage cycling and walking
- e. And in the longer term consideration of pricing mechanisms to encourage better utilisation of this key part of the transport network

These measures will need to be considered in consultation with users and key stakeholders to ensure they are effectively used while maintaining business competitiveness.

In summary:

- a. We welcome the opportunity of giving evidence to this Inquiry
- b. This project is consistent with delivering on key transportation policy as set out in the Regional Transport Strategy, Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and the Strategic Road Improvement Programme
- c. The existence of traffic-light controlled junctions on this key interchange is creating a major capacity constraint, and leading to unnecessary traffic congestion and preventing the free-flow of traffic. The proposals for the new grade-separated Interchange will remove this bottleneck and enable free flowing traffic
- d. The completion of the York Gate Interchange will reduce congestion and improve journey times, and most importantly journey time reliability
- e. The proposals will improve access to Belfast, and around Belfast, and support further investment and economic development in Belfast to the benefit of its citizens
- f. The proposals will enhance access to Northern Ireland’s key gateways, namely the Ports of Belfast and Larne and the George Best Belfast City Airport and the Belfast International Airport

CBI members strongly support this necessary investment in the York Gate Interchange and believe the current proposals will deliver significant economic and social benefits to the city and beyond.

Thank you.

CBI Northern Ireland

November 2015’

Inspectors' Comments Nigel Smyth (CBI Northern Ireland)

The points made by Mr Smyth in his presentation supporting the proposed scheme have been noted.

4.4.9 Interested Party Number IP68

Name Kevin McShane (Belfast Harbour Commissioners)

Date first submitted N/A

Whilst it is understood that informal discussions took place with representatives from the Harbour Commissioners during the development scheme, they did not make any formal submissions to TNI by the end of the consultation period.

Mr McShane made a presentation in support of the Scheme on the morning of Day 2 of the Inquiry as follows:-

'Good morning. My name is Kevin McShane and I hold a degree in civil engineering and I am a chartered engineer, a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, a member of the Chartered Institute of the Highways and Transportation, and a member of the Transport Planning Society.

I am currently retained by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and have been for the last three years to advise them on various road proposals, access strategies and development proposals within the Harbour Estate. One of the things that I have been involved with over the last year is a lot of heavy meetings and debates with both the Road Service, or TransportNI, and URS and the designers of the scheme.

As part of those discussions and on-going debates we have had opportunities to look at the access strategy for the Port, both with and without this particular interchange. We did raise a number of concerns with the Department on the design and looked in particular at routes from Nelson Street, Duncrue Street and Garmoyle Street, the logic being that the Harbour has a number of accesses on the northern shore. We have the access at Fortwilliam. We have an access which we refer to as the Northern Access which comes on to Duncrue Street literally at the mouth of the off-slip at Dock Street. As you come past that and around the corner at Garmoyle Street opposite the fire station there is an access that still exists into the Harbour Estate on the corner. As you come further on round to Dock Street itself and turn left there is an access in and out of the Harbour Estate with two lanes in each direction known as Corry Road.

Looking at the various accesses, the Port is probably one of the biggest employers in Belfast, and we heard yesterday from the Freight Transport Association where there is over 23 million tonnes of freight and significant amount of movements. Obviously the Port is trying to compete with Dublin and it is also competing with Larne and it is one of the major export locations for our product out of Northern Ireland to the UK.

Just to pick up the point raised yesterday about the extent of the 10T network, although Belfast doesn't want to be seen to be supporting Larne,

but we must note that under the 10T network there is a Priority Project 13 that has been on-going for a number of years, and already the EU in 2009, under proposal UK 92708, the EU provided 50% of the design funding for the A8 project, and they recognised that under Priority Project 13 that link from Belfast to Larne is a critical part of the network.

That was further enhanced in 2011 under UK 93016, which my understanding from the record is 20% of the 91m Euro construction cost was also met by the 10T programme. So that in our mind reinforces that linkage. So in our view the 10T doesn't stop at Belfast, it continues on to Larne, and therefore the interchange is a notable part of that network.

We hadn't originally planned to make representation to the Inquiry because we were quite pleased with the work done by the Department in taking on board our concerns. Indeed, I would like to highlight that significant off-line computer modelling has been prepared by URS looking specifically in more detail at some of the concerns we raised, for example potential queues at Dock Street as a result of Port traffic coming out and turning right onto the Nelson Street alignment to go up to the new slip at Duncrue.

Likewise that increase in traffic would normally have resulted in increased delays from our northern access at Duncrue Street, and again the Department provided us with more detailed modelling looking specifically at the peak hour periods to give us peace of mind that the issues have been taken on board. We are still in discussion about the road markings but that is a matter of detail and should be easily resolved I will imagine.

The Harbour Commissioners took the view that they wanted to make some comments on this because that particular scheme does have a number of assumptions and a number of implications on movement of traffic to and from the Port.

However, when we went through 95 pages of information that we received it very much is based on assumptions. There was no detail provided to us at all as to how these were calculated. Looking at the diagrams, a lot of the assumptions seem to be based on an assumed journey time multiplied by the volume of traffic. That is the essential basis of the calculation that's been used to determine the value of time. Now, the Department had made available a quite detailed COBA assessment which has a lot of assumptions based into that, but that assessment is based on tried technology that has been around for many decades and is used by many local authorities and roads authorities in assessing projects.

The accident figures within that, for example, are an assumption that the programme will predict as to the level of accidents likely to take place given a particular junction arrangement, or given particular flow conditions, and they are very much based on empirical data from other research that was carried out at the development of the programme. Essentially those accidents are very much used to put a cost into the scheme, because as we all know a fatality or a major injury accident is quite expensive to the economy. So those costs are built into that COBA assessment, and that is why the predictions, in my mind, are sometimes quite onerous from the likes of COBA, because it is there to try and value that cost and the potential that could happen. However, the scheme going forward does try to remove conflicts from the network and it tries to take away stop lines and intersections where most of those incidents are likely to occur.'

Comments on the Vector Proposal

'Looking at the Vector proposal there was a number of concerns that we had. Mr Lynch discussed this morning about some of the existing routes that are available. One of the examples that he used was the journey from the Albert Clock down Victoria Street, turn right at the back of Custom House Square and onto Donegal Quay. That is of particular interest to the Harbour Commissioners, because their actual office is located at the end of Donegal Quay. City Quays is currently under construction. It has planning approval for a number of developments. We have Clarendon Dock and all of that traffic currently has to exit left onto Corporation Street or directly out onto Donegal Quay from the corner, just below where the mouse is at present, and all of that traffic makes its way up past the Oval where Mr Lynch put his video cameras. Anybody who sits in that in the current traffic flow at present will note that it is extremely difficult for the traffic to get out of that movement and, in particular, for the Port there are significant delays to that traffic on the existing flows.

If we were to reroute some of the M3 traffic around that route and across on to the Queen Elizabeth Bridge and on to the slip roads on the other side that is going to exacerbate that problem and gives us reason for concern.

Again, looking at the detail, you will note on the Queen Elizabeth Bridge there is quite a wide footpath that forms part of a cycle link. Anyone coming across that will see there is quite a high kerb line. That is what we call a containment kerb. It is there to stop vehicles from mounting that footway or cycleway. That bridge had been widened and the strength on the footpaths doesn't exist to take heavy goods vehicles loading. So although Mr Lynch commented that you can have six lanes across that particular bridge you can't; the structure of that bridge is not there to accommodate that so you are very much having to use the lanes that are currently there.

Again, going over to the exit from the Westlink, the Vector proposal made a lot of discussion about the three lanes that currently come down onto Westlink and widen out but, again, there was very little discussion to take account of the fact that all that traffic has to come to a stop. There is a set of traffic signals at the end of that road, and when you go across underneath the M2 you literally only have two lanes going underneath the M2 that are proceeding onto the M3. So it is not three lanes moving forward, there is only two of them that actually proceed on to the on-slip.

Now the Department's view, even looking at it simplistically, if you have lanes coming down there that would have to stop, if you take away that stop, Mr Lynch in his methodology is right that there would be free flowing conditions to allow that traffic to progress subject to there being no restrictions in front. But that is the ethos of going from one lane onto a slip road, because two lanes will no longer have to stop at the traffic lights so you don't have to provide additional capacity at the stop line. You have the free flow condition so you don't need as many lanes to accommodate those movements.

Looking at the Department's scheme we were very pleased with the infrastructure being provided to allow commercial vehicles the free flow to proceed along the various routes in place.

Mr Lynch made some comments about restrictions on the Westlink and Sydenham Bypass, but also in the slides he made reference to the fact that traffic would have to redistribute and use some of the existing junctions. In particular he made reference to Stockmans Lane as one of the examples

and said that traffic can come off earlier and find an alternative route through the city. Again, no account has been taken of the fact that a lot of these existing junctions are already congested. Stockmans Lane Interchange, for example, is signalised in order to manage the traffic flow as opposed to allowing the queues to take place.

The other thing that wasn't commented on is that Belfast operates what we call an Urban Traffic Control Centre. Now that centre is operated by the Department and there are a lot of signal plans, as we call it, that are built into that to manage varying traffic conditions. For example, I understand there is a Northern Ireland football match plan whereby the signals are optimised to bring traffic to certain areas by controlling the traffic light times so that traffic can be managed in major events.

There are issues whenever a major event takes place at the Odyssey, or the SSE Arena as it is now called, and again there is a plan in place to allow traffic to be stored on some of the road networks, and that is managed so that the Department control where the queuing takes place. Those are there because the signals are in place to allow that traffic to be managed.

If we look at trying to introduce a free flow condition, again I think it was slide 74 that Mr Lynch referred to, and we were talking there about taking the traffic from the bottom of Westlink on his orange route which brought us down in front of Citygate, underneath Dock Street and then back up onto the slip road on the other side, and there were a series of black dots on that coming from north Belfast onto York Street, and we talked about the fact that movement would be split, there would be no interaction between the two, and very much the benefits were being achieved by having traffic channelled along particular roads.

Now, in road design terms, from our point of view at the Harbour, the critical issue is having a safe and sweeping bend for our HGVs to come into the Estate. The difficulty is that the radii required on a free flowing strategic road are quite a large radius and significant departure would be required in order to introduce those 90 degree bends in all those roads in order to achieve free flowing conditions. Again, that is an issue that the Harbour would be concerned about because that is unlikely to be deliverable. The speeds would have to be significantly reduced at those corners and departures would be required in the highway standards in order to achieve those. So that is something we are concerned about.

Talking about the constructions on the road network, for example, we know that within the Harbour Estate part of the development proposals is the Titanic Quarter. There is a planning condition associated with that development to introduce the Connsbank Interchange at Dee Street before high levels of development can take place within the Harbour Estate. That also forms part of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan as a scheme that is there to introduce improvements to Dee Street.

So we are fully aware that this proposal for the York Street Interchange does not deal in detail with other off-site improvements. The Harbour Commissioners are very aware that there are other schemes that are planned and proposed that will provide benefits to those. Another one is the Sydenham Bypass widening scheme which is part of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. So we are very aware that as time progresses other schemes are taking place, but we still need to provide the infrastructure at York Street so that those improvements can give maximum benefit.

Coming to the trial run. Slide 74 in particular was the one that gave us a lot of concern, because there are a number of notes in yellow boxes that the Department had already referred to. Under a trial condition:

"No access to Dock Street or M2 from north Belfast."

So we are very concerned that was a restriction for staff coming into the Harbour Estate, never mind vehicles. There was no access to M3 or north Belfast from the docks and on the access from Fortwilliam, yet in the Port activities we have a County Down Port as well, and the M3 link is one of the essential links between both sides of the river. So that connectivity between the two sections of the Port is critical to the operation of the Port, and we are very concerned and would not like to see that lost for any period of time, never mind a long term solution.

Throughout the work there are lots of words like "should". For example "This should sort out the flow problems for 75% of the users." Even if "should" is correct, what about the other 25%? One of the issues we did have with the Department Scheme is that they did deal with 100% of users and dealt with public transport. There were measures built in to accommodate public transport provision, measures built in to deal with pedestrians and cyclists, and from our point of view there were measures and routes significantly built in to accommodate the Port traffic.

The concern that we have with the Vector proposal is that detail has not been examined and not thought about in any level of detail to give us comfort that such a scheme would actually satisfy the needs of the Port.

In summary the trial run - we have a significant concerns that some of these routes exist. For example, the one we just talked about from the Albert Clock around the Customs House, there is nothing to stop drivers from doing that route today, yet drivers choose not to make that manoeuvre. Similar to other ones, there is nothing to stop traffic turning left at the bottom of the Westlink and coming down York Street, looping around Dock Street and coming up or heading off to other areas of the city, but again they choose not to do that. Not like systems where you have a number of bottles or tin cans moving down a conveyor belt, if a trial takes place and a bottle falls off, that is fine you can tweak the processes and deal with that. In a trial like this if somebody gets killed how do we deal with that? And there is a lot of work that would have to take place before any trial could be implemented on the ground, and we have serious concerns about a trial and the impact on the City.

The benefit of the York Street Interchange Scheme is that it connects our three motorway networks. It keeps those strategic movements on the priority roads that are designed to accommodate them. The difficulty with this (alternative) proposal is that it puts that strategic traffic back onto the City Centre streets. North Queen Street, for example, may be one of the routes used by traffic, and we have heard yesterday concerns from the residents about how would they feel if the motorway still exists as it does today, but they have more traffic coming down through their residential area. Some of that traffic may be Port related because we may have no choice but to go that way.

Again the Harbour Commissioners feel that this (the Vector proposal) is not a scheme that we would support and we would prefer to see the Department scheme.'

Inspectors' Comments (Kevin McShane [Belfast Harbour Commissioners])

The points made by Mr Smyth in his presentation supporting the proposed scheme have been noted.

His additional comments on the alternative Vector proposal have also been noted and for further detail on this see OBJ07 Paschal Lynch.

5. CORRESPONDENCE FROM THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE INQUIRY

The following e-mail from Chris Murphy was passed the Inspectors at the Inquiry and was read out by the Lead Inspector after the final objection had been heard on Thursday afternoon.

'Hello,

I went to observe the public inquiry today on the York Street Interchange (YSI). There was an opportunity to ask for clarification on material presented earlier, but unfortunately most the time allotted to this was taken up (and delayed the next session) by one questioner. I couldn't stay beyond the break for lunch.

I wanted to clarify the speed limit on York Street - that it would remain 30mph (or less)?

Secondly; the initial YSI plans were revised and those were published in September 2015. Were these revised plans approved by TransportNI's own Cycling Unit?

Would you be able to have these questions asked on Thursday and the answers on public record?

Thanks'

Responding at the Inquiry for TNI, Mr Spiers confirmed that York Street would remain at 30mph and that the cycling unit had approved the revised plans.

The Inspector asked for both of these confirmations to be conveyed direct to the questioner by e-mail.

6. FINAL CONTRIBUTIONS AT THE INQUIRY

6.1 Ms Milena Komarova

Ms Komarova explained that she was attending the Inquiry as a member of the public and that she was a research fellow at Queens University and the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation and Social Justice.

Based on her previous experience doing research on regeneration projects in Belfast, she wanted to know whether there had been, or were there, any plans for, an Equality Impact Assessment to be carried out for the York Street Interchange Project.

Mr Spiers replied that a Section 75 Screening Assessment was available on the website and the Inspector suggested that an informal conversation between Ms Komarova and Mr Spiers after the Inquiry had finished could be of value.

Mr Hackett added that an Equality Impact Assessment was a public process where evidence would need to be submitted from the local community concerning the impact of the Scheme. When DSD did a Quality Impact Assessment they conducted a proper public event and accepted submissions along the lines of the evidence presented by Mr Paul O'Neill. There had been no opportunity to have such an assessment and Mr Hackett suggested that this needed to happen for the YSI.

Mr Hackett concluded by saying on a slightly different subject that there should have been a co-designed approach and that Belfast City Council and the new Director of Planning should be involved in this process.

6.2 TransportNI

Mr McGuinness said that in order to avoid any confusion he wanted to confirm that the Exception Report, which had been discussed earlier in the Inquiry, was available on-line.

Mr McGuinness went on to say that before thanking everyone he wanted to deal with some more mundane issues. He had been asked to remind the Inspectors and the public that the purpose of this scheme was to fix the most significant bottleneck in Northern Ireland. TNI accepted that there were significant constraints but the Team believed that the Scheme that had been put forward for consideration was the best in terms of policy, engineering and the achievement of Strategic Objectives.

Traffic management issues were addressed in 2005 and 2009 and the project then moved on through the design stage. What has been presented at the Inquiry was the result of a robust analysis.

Mr McGuinness added that he wanted to convey his own personal thanks to everybody who had made a contribution at the Inquiry and who probably had to listen to more than they would have liked. A number of sensitive issues had been covered, and TNI appreciated the time and the effort that had been put in to present all of the objections. He hoped that not only was the Departmental position clearer but also the concerns of the various parties and in particular the local residents.

TNI also appreciated the support that has been proffered to the scheme by the FTA, BCC and the CBI.

Mr Spiers said that he wanted to reiterate the view which had been expressed about the hard work undertaken by everyone associated with the Inquiry and in particular his own team who had been working late into the evening to respond to

issues so that the Inquiry could remain on schedule.

He added that he wanted to confirm the Department's commitment to continue engagement with the local residents and key stakeholders. He was fully satisfied that the proposal provided the most appropriate solution for the bottleneck on the strategic road network.

Mr Spiers thanked the Inspectors for their patience and careful consideration of the issues and concluded by saying that he expected to have moved on (retired) by the time the Report was issued, but he looked forward to reading it.

The Inspector thanked him for his comments.

6.3 The Inspector

The Inspector said that there had at times been robust interchanges of ideas and it had been extremely interesting. He wanted to begin by thanking those members of the public who came along to give their presentations and to express their opinions about the scheme. Ideas had in general been expressed in a very logical and forthright manner, and that had been very useful.

He moved to thank the TNI team, adding that he believed that this was the sixth occasion that he had been working on a roads Inquiry with Russell Bissland, Gareth Coughlin and Pat Turley from URS and their supporting colleagues. He added that even though he had not always agreed with their proposals, he had always found them to be professional, energetic and enthusiastic, and that was appreciated.

He also thanked the hard working Stenographer, Kay Hendrick, pointing out that it was particularly difficult for her to record what was said when people speak very quickly, so it was always a very good idea to speak slowly.

Turning to Mr Ian Kernaghan, the Inquiry Programme Officer, the Inspector said that though this had been his first Inquiry, he had handled his role very competently and efficiently and his efforts were much appreciated.

The Inspector concluded by thanking Mr Jack Cargo, his Assistant Inspector colleague.

7. INSPECTORS' CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Legislative Requirements

During the Public Inquiry held at The Spires Conference and Exhibition Centre, Belfast, between Tuesday 10th and Thursday 12th November 2015, the following were considered;

- the Environmental Statement prepared by the Department for the proposal for the provision of a grade-separated junction at York Street to provide direct links between the Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways together with opinions expressed in relation to it under the provision of Articles 67A and 130 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993;
- the proposal to make The Trunk Roads T1, T3 and T7 (York Street Interchange) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 under Articles 14(1), 15(1), 16(1) and (2) and 68 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993;
- the proposal to make an order under article 113 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 and Schedule 6 to the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 for the purpose of acquiring compulsorily the lands for the construction of a grade-separated junction at York Street to provide direct links between the Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways.

Proceedings on the Environmental Statement, Direction Order and Vesting Order were taken concurrently in accordance with Article 133A of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.

7.2 The Need For The Proposed York Street Interchange

The City of Belfast is Northern Ireland's major transport hub and the main transport gateway to the rest of the United Kingdom and Europe. The Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) is typical of most large urban areas, comprising a set of radial road links that converge on a central hub, represented by the City Centre. The BMA occupies a strategic position on several Key Transport Corridors (KTCs) that collectively form part of the strategic road network managed by Transport NI; these include the:

- Eastern Seaboard KTC;
- North-Western KTC;
- Northern KTC; and
- South-Western KTC.

The strategic road network, along with the rail network, forms Northern Ireland's overall RSTN.

The KTCs within Northern Ireland provide connection to other major European cities through the Region's gateways. These gateways include Northern Ireland's airports and sea ports. The Eastern Seaboard KTC runs through Belfast and provides connections to the regional gateways of the Port of Belfast and George Best Belfast City Airport. Within the BMA it comprises the M1, Westlink and M2. The importance of the Eastern Seaboard KTC and its component roads is recognised by the European Commission in its designation of the corridor as part of the Priority 9, 13 and 26 axes within the Trans-European Transport Network.

The existing York Street junction is a node on the Eastern Seaboard KTC, located to the north of Belfast City Centre. At this node, strategic traffic movements along this corridor interact with strategic traffic movements to and from the M3 and local traffic movements into and out of Belfast City Centre. The conflict between

strategic and local traffic movements is presently controlled by a complex arrangement of traffic signals that includes four signalised junctions at York Street, York Link, Nelson Street and Great George's Street. The overall signalised "box" created by these four signalised junctions is known as the York Street Junction.

The capacity of the existing York Street junction is limited by both the magnitude of competing traffic flows and the various physical constraints at the location. These physical constraints include adjacent residential housing, commercial, retail and industrial properties, elevated rail infrastructure carried on the Dargan Bridge and the capacity of existing roads infrastructure including the Westlink, the M2 and the elevated M3 carried on the Lagan Bridge.

The lack of capacity at the junction causes undue congestion and thereby delays for freight, public transport and private vehicles. It is therefore considered a bottleneck on the strategic road network, in accordance with the definition established by Northern Ireland's Regional Transportation Strategy.

Improvements to the strategic road network have been established in Northern Ireland policy through the publication of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and the RTS. These strategies are implemented in local policy through the RSTNTP, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI). These regional strategies, together with the local policy publications, were based on the Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies, an objective-led approach to seeking solutions to transport-related problems and were prepared in consultation with and informed by stakeholders.

7.3 Scheme-Specific Objectives

The following scheme-specific objectives were identified by TNI and used in the development of the Proposed Scheme;

- to remove a bottleneck on the strategic road network;
- to deliver an affordable solution to reduce congestion on the strategic road network;
- to improve reliability of strategic journey times for the travelling public;
- to improve access to the regional gateways from the Eastern Seaboard Key Transport Corridor;
- to maintain access to existing properties, community facilities and commercial interests;
- to maintain access for pedestrians and cyclists and;
- to improve separation between strategic and local traffic.

7.4 Junction Improvement Options Considered by The Department

TNI examined a range of strategies for the improvement of York Street junction.

In 2008, URS was commissioned to assist TNI in the development of the scheme to a point where a Preferred Option could be selected. This included completion of a number of scheme assessments in accordance with the procedures established by the DMRB. These procedures required the assessment of engineering, environmental, traffic and economic advantages and disadvantages associated with the scheme, at various stages in the development process.

In 2009, URS completed its Stage 1 scheme assessment to broadly identify the advantages and disadvantages associated with a range of preliminary junction options. The findings from the assessment were reported in the Preliminary Options Report of March 2009, identifying that the improvements would provide significant benefits to the region. This was endorsed by TNI and the report recommended shortlisting four of the six assessed preliminary options.

In October 2012, URS completed its Stage 2 scheme assessment to identify factors to be taken into account in the consideration of alternative interchange options and to identify environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages and disadvantages associated with these.

The findings from the assessment were reported in the Preferred Options Report dated October 2012, identifying that several options would present benefits to the region. As endorsed by TNI, the report recommended that Option C (a fully grade-separated interchange with links aligned in underpasses below existing ground level) should be selected as the Preferred Option for the scheme.

The Minister for Regional Development subsequently made the public announcement of the Preferred Option for the scheme on 6th December 2012.

Following the announcement of the Preferred Option for the scheme, the URS commission was extended to include the preliminary design of the Proposed Scheme, undertake the statutory EIA in accordance with the requirements of DMRB, and prepare draft Orders, specifically an ES, a Designation Order (DO) and an Order (VO).

This major road improvement scheme would be delivered by TNI in accordance with the statutory procedures of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 [as amended]. It has been noted that these are distinct from planning approval procedures and require TNI to prepare and publish an ES and Draft Orders for consultation.

An exhibition of the Proposed Scheme (The Orders Exhibition) was held in the Ramada Encore Hotel, Talbot Street, Belfast on the 9th and 10th February 2015.

Representatives from TNI and URS were in attendance to explain the proposals and also to answer questions. Notification was given that copies of the ES were available for inspection during the exhibition and also during office hours at five specified locations in Belfast from 27th January 2015 to 10th March 2015. In addition, the ES could be viewed on the TNI website, on a free CD and furthermore a bound paper copy was offered by TNI for a fee of £185.

Notification was given that any written communications expressing support, objection, or comment should be sent to TNI Eastern Divisional Headquarters by 10th of March 2015.

It was understood at this stage that depending on the nature and number of responses, a Public Inquiry might be convened to determine if the scheme should proceed as planned or not.

7.5 Impact of The Proposed Scheme on Adjacent Residential Areas

It was very apparent from the outset that objections could be anticipated from the residents of Little George's Street and surrounding areas, due to the proximity of the proposed Scheme and this proved to be the case.

Several issues were highlighted in the written submissions to TNI. In addition a number of residents and others representing those living in the area spoke at the Inquiry and their views, together with the TNI responses have been recorded elsewhere in this Report.

The most prominent contributors from this group who spoke at the Inquiry were:-

Mr Paul O'Neill - Ashton Community Trust (OBJ06).

Mr Mark Hackett (OBJ23).

Mrs Bernie Caughey (OBJ25).

Belfast City Council (COM12)

Mr Brendan Callan (IP62).

Mrs Brenda Murphy (IP66).

The contributions made by each person at the Inquiry can be found under their individual names and reference numbers which are shown immediately above.

A summary of the most significant concerns and views expressed by both the residents and/or their representatives is as follows:-

- Residents already had health issues due to the air pollution, noise and vibration caused by vehicles on the existing adjacent road. These problems would increase with the Scheme in place, as the new carriageways would be closer to their homes and at a higher elevation.
- Mitigation measures designed to address the adverse effects of road noise and safety concerns could increase the visual obstruction.
- The removal of the existing mature trees and shrubs from the bank behind the houses would lead to increased levels of air pollution and a loss of privacy.
- The very steep bank which would be created above the existing retaining walls behind the houses would only support the growth of low shrubs. These would not provide a level of visual screening to match that provided by the trees and other plants which are already there.
- Adults and children were concerned that a vehicle could accidentally leave the road and fall on them in their gardens.
- Adequate levels of light were required in homes.
- Noise, vibration and pollution from contractors plant and equipment would disrupt daily life during the construction of the new junction.
- A number of residents work at night and sleep during the day. Sleeping would be difficult for these individuals during the construction phase due to noise and vibration.
- Residents would not qualify for any mitigation measures such as double glazing to offset the adverse effects of the Scheme as the necessary criteria would not be met.
- With the Scheme in place, pedestrians would have to walk an additional 125 metres in order to reach the City Centre over the proposed York Street Bridge. The provision of steps from the Molyneux Street/Henry Street area onto the bridge to alleviate the problem could create difficulties for elderly people and might not be supported by the PSNI.
- The tapering enclosed space which would be created between the final section of York Street Bridge and Cityside Retail Park could attract those who behaved in an anti-social manner.
- The elevated nature of the York Street Bridge would put local residents at risk on those occasions during the year when traditional parades were passing by. The DOJ and the PSNI had to be involved in finding an acceptable solution.
- The area around the steps located to the north of North Queen Street Bridge attracted people behaving in an anti-social manner and this feature needed to be remodelled as part of the YSI Scheme.

- A group of houses exists in Thomas Street off an awkward one way system which has only one way in and out. Concerns were raised that:
 - access may be further restricted and traffic diversions created during the construction phase leading to increased disruption;
 - there would be noise, amenity disturbance and drainage issues during the construction phase;
 - the street is currently screened by planting and this will be lost and not replaced.
- The traumatic impact and enduring legacy of the McGurk's bar bombing on the families of those killed and on the general New Lodge community cannot be overstated. The enduring emotional and symbolic significance of this memorial site is of huge importance. Any process relating to the memorial site must be done with the direct involvement and agreement of the relatives of those who were killed.
- It was important for those residents who would be adversely affected by the proposed Scheme to be able to play an active role in the design process.
- More intensive and meaningful dialogue was required with all stakeholders including residents, elected representatives, civil engineers and the PSNI, in order to create shared design decision making.
- Compensatory projects should be undertaken using a co-design approach that clearly demonstrates that the area has been respected and treated in an equitable manner with the expenditure of such a significant amount of public funds.

It was noted that The Strategic Advisory Group has recommended the installation of decorative aluminium composite panels in order to improve the appearance of the parapets of North Queen Street Bridge and TNI had agreed to address the lighting issue under the bridge. In addition, Mr Spires offered to give sympathetic consideration to addressing the issues surrounding the steps at the Inquiry, even though the area in question was just outside the footprint of the Scheme.

From the above it is apparent that discussions involving other stakeholders has already led to some mitigation measures being identified and agreed which should assist in reducing a few of the negative impacts of the proposed road alterations. It is clear that this process should continue.

However, it is equally clear that beyond an understandable call for much greater dialogue between TNI, the local community and other stakeholders to discuss the outstanding issues, very few suggestions were made at the Inquiry as to exactly what might be done in practical terms to address the unresolved concerns. Perhaps this reflects the possibility that effective and acceptable mitigation measures may not be readily available or at best be extremely difficult to identify.

It is not an essential requirement for those leading a TNI sponsored Public Inquiry to identify additional mitigation measures. However, upon examination of Scheme drawings, the Inspectors concluded that it might be possible to move the alignment of both carriageways slightly further to the south in order to reduce the impact on the residential properties in Little George's Street.

It was recognised from the outset that such an adjustment to the plans could have a negative impact on the properties located on Great George's Street and also upon the development under way on the Apex Housing site on North Queen Street. Furthermore, it was realised that due to the many site constraints associated with the existing built infrastructure, the suggested modification could

lead to DMRB compliance and other difficulties elsewhere on the Scheme which might not be immediately apparent.

During the Inquiry, the Inspector asked Mr Spiers to arrange a preliminary technical assessment of this proposal from a 'how could this be made to work' perspective. This resulted in the production of 'The Westlink Realignment Assessment Summary' dated 20 November 2015.

The full Assessment Summary can be viewed on the TNI website and two options were very quickly identified and considered by URS as follows:

- Option 1 - Realignment of the centreline of the Westlink such that the nearside kerb line of the northbound carriageway would be approximately coincident with its existing position at North Queen Street Bridge.
- Option 2 - Realignment of the centreline of the Westlink by 1.5 metres south of its position in the Proposed Scheme (to reduce widening required on the south side of North Queen Street Bridge).

The TNI Westlink Realignment Assessment Summary concluded as follows:

'It is accepted that the Proposed Scheme will have an impact on residential properties to the rear of Little George's Street, although no land take is required. From this high level examination of alternative options for the alignment of the Westlink, it is apparent that any changes to lessen the impacts for residents of Little George's Street may result in more significant impacts for residents of both Great George's Street and those at the new Apex Housing development. (Former PSNI site).

The options presented in this paper are not exhaustive and have only been developed to a preliminary level. We consider that we may be able to fully develop a solution which moves the carriageway away from Little George's Street towards Great George's Street to such a degree that the impact on parties to the north and south of the Westlink is balanced.

TransportNI would comply with any recommendation made by the Inspector to further examine the issue to determine if an optimum solution can be arrived at.'

It is accepted and understood that it would have been impossible for URS to have reached a definitive conclusion as the result of the preliminary examination of such a significant change. For the same reason it would not be possible to recommend a specific design change for the Scheme as part of this Report.

However, it is encouraging that no insurmountable obstacles were identified and further work will indeed be recommended in the next section to determine if an optimum solution could be achieved.

7.6 Provision for Cyclists

It was very clear from reading the earlier correspondence from Sustrans and a considerable number of other Objectors, that the original proposed provision for the cycling community was far from satisfactory. Indeed, Mr Clarke (Sustrans) spent some time reinforcing this point in his presentation at the Inquiry.

However, it is equally apparent that a combination of dialogue between TNI and Sustrans Representatives, a willingness to make changes and the introduction of current design standards has led to a situation where most of the original issues have been resolved.

It was claimed that an earlier adoption of the higher standards could have eliminated the need to 'retro-fit' the design changes. However, the constraints

imposed by the existing built infrastructure might still have limited the room for manoeuvre by the design team.

It is not clear whether the anticipated very considerable increase in the number of cycling journeys over the next ten years has been fully assessed by TNI within the context of the YSI Scheme. It was claimed that a rise in cycling use is foreseen within the DRD Bicycling Strategy, which was published in August 2015.

The major drivers of this change would appear to be:

- the construction of the new Ulster University complex;
- the construction and location of the new student residential accommodation;
- the future expansion of the Belfast bike hire scheme.

Continued dialogue between TNI and Sustrans is clearly highly desirable in order to seek acceptable solutions to the outstanding issues.

Whilst acknowledging concerns over 'project creep', TNI should re-examine their proposals for the roads at the extremities of the Scheme to ensure that as far as possible the anticipated cycling and other infrastructure developments outside the footprint of the Scheme are taken into account in the YSI project.

8. INSPECTORS' RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 General

Having reviewed the evidence presented by the Department, the Consultants, Supporters, Objectors and others, both before, during and after the Inquiry and also having considered the detail contained in the Environmental Statements and other documentation, it is believed that the need to replace the existing York Street Junction Gyrotory System in Belfast has been demonstrated.

It is therefore recommended that:

- The ES prepared by the Department containing the proposals for the provision of a grade-separated junction at York Street to provide direct links between the Westlink and the M2 and M3 under the provision of Articles 67A and 130 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, should be used as a the basis for taking the scheme forward through both the detailed design and eventual construction stages.
- The proposal to make The Trunk Roads T1, T3 and T7 (York Street Interchange) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 under Articles 14(1), 15(1), 16(1) and (2) and 68 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 should be implemented.
- The proposal to make an order under article 113 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 and Schedule 6 to the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 for the purpose of acquiring compulsorily the lands for the construction of a grade-separated junction at York Street to provide direct links between the Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways should be implemented.
- The general recommendations set out immediately above are to be considered in conjunction with the additional recommendations set out in 8.2 below.

8.2 Adjacent Residential Areas

The most significant of the numerous issues and concerns were summarised in Section 7.5 (Inspectors' Considerations) above, and in the majority of cases they remained unresolved at the end of the public phase of the Inquiry.

Where specific recommendations have been identified, these are set out below and in all other instances each of the remaining issues should form the basis for further discussions with either individual residents, or resident groups. Other stakeholders may also need to be involved.

The specific recommendations are as follows:

- Since the Strategic Advisory Group has already identified some mitigation measures to reduce the negative impacts of the Scheme, it should continue to meet as and when required until the completion of the YSI project. An early agenda item should be the re-examination of the structure of the Group itself, with for example, the possible addition of a landscaping or architectural specialist to provide guidance and advice on the treatment of the bank behind the houses on Little George's Street and other aspects of the Scheme.
- It is considered important for the residents to have an active voice, both during the remainder of the design phase of the Scheme and throughout the construction process. It is recommended that TNI should arrange a meeting in the York Street area

with Mr O'Neill, Mr Hackett, Mrs Caughey, Mr Callan, Mrs Murphy and an appropriate representative from Belfast City Council.

The purpose of this meeting would be to;

- identify and agree an effective communications structure and procedure to keep the residents fully informed about the progress of the Scheme;
- create an effective mechanism to enable residents to make suggestions about the Scheme and to raise concerns as and when they might arise.
- In collaboration with all the relevant stakeholders, including the local residents, TNI to identify and implement appropriate existing infrastructure adjustments to help to address the anti-social behaviour issues associated with the steps adjacent to North Queen Street Bridge. This work to be carried out as an integral part of the YSI project.
- It is virtually certain that the memorial to those who were killed in the bombing of McGurk's Bar in 1971 will have to be relocated because of the need to widen North Queen Street Bridge. TNI to work closely with the families of those who perished in order to ensure that the recreation of this very significant memorial is carried out in accordance with their wishes and expectations.
- TNI to conduct a further examination of the possible realignment of the road away from Little George's Street, to determine if an optimum solution can be identified and implemented as part of the Scheme.
It is considered extremely important that the residential communities on both sides of the road are both consulted and informed about any proposed changes to the design, with the final decision on the way forward remaining with TNI.
It should be noted that the Inspectors support this potential modification in principle.

8.3 Community Liaison

- It is recommended that a high level of communication and liaison is maintained throughout the future detailed design and eventual construction phases with all individuals and organisations who would be affected by the proposed Scheme.
Where applicable, every effort should be made to reach agreement on appropriate and acceptable measures to mitigate the impact of the project.

8.4 Provision for Cyclists

- Dialogue to continue between TNI and Sustrans in order to seek acceptable solutions to the outstanding issues.
- TNI to re-examine their proposals for the roads at the extremities of the Scheme to ensure that as far as possible the anticipated cycling and other infrastructure developments outside the footprint of the Scheme are taken into account within the YSI project.
- TNI to reassess the implications of both the new University and emerging DRD cycling strategies on the Scheme, as it is anticipated that this will transform the area around York Street beyond recognition
- TNI to investigate mitigation measures to provide a degree of protection to

cyclists and pedestrians from wind and rain on the York Street Bridge.

8.5 Summary of Recommendations Relating to Individuals and Organisations

Page	Ref. No.	Name/s	Recommendation/s
43	SU07	Seamus Leheny, Freight Transport Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTA to be fully involved in the formulation of the Traffic Management Plan to be implemented during the construction phase of the Scheme. • An appropriate information system to be established by TNI to advise FTA Operators of access, parking and other relevant arrangements to be applied during the construction phase.
50	SU09	Bernard Clarke, Translink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNI to work with Translink in order to develop suitable temporary traffic management arrangements and appropriate traffic and travel advice, both before and during the construction of the proposed Scheme.
145	OBJ24	Garth Boyd/Karen Smith, Trouw Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNI and the Contractor to have consultations with Trouw Nutrition in order to ensure that appropriate access the premises is provided at all times throughout the construction phase of the Scheme. • TNI to work with Trouw Nutrition in order to resolve the land ownership record issue. • As vibration of their weighbridge is a potential sensitivity issue for Trouw Nutrition, a Method Statement to be produced by the Contractors as part of the detailed design process defining the proposed method of working. Vibration monitoring equipment to be provided during the construction phase and remedial action taken to address any adverse vibration issues caused by the Contractor if required. • TNI to contact the DOE in order to advise them of the upcoming works and possible implications for their weighbridge facility.
198	COM03	Richard Agus, Director, MRA Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion between Mr Agus, TNI and other interested parties to continue with the aim of clarifying and resolving the issues surrounding the loss of car park spaces and the need to create an access onto North Queen Street. • Discussions to continue between Mr Agus and TNI to clarify and resolve the issue of access to York Street being closed during phase 9 of the Scheme. • TNI to give further sympathetic consideration to providing temporary signage to Cityside Retail Park from both the Strategic Road Network and for pedestrians

Page	Ref. No.	Name/s	Recommendation/s
			during the construction phase of the Scheme
215	COM11	John McCorry (North Belfast Partnership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNI to discuss with NBP the possibility their becoming members of the SAG. Should this not occur, then TNI to arrange for NBP to receive regular updates on the activities and recommendations made by the SAG. • TNI to investigate local input to the uptake and implementation of the project social clauses.
224	COM12	Belfast City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TNI (and in due course, the Contractor) to liaise closely with BCC throughout the remainder of the design phase and throughout the construction stage, to ensure that issues are identified and addressed as quickly and efficiently as possible. • TNI to make every effort to find the means and the necessary resources to incorporate any proposed changes and improvements identified and supported by a majority within the Strategic Advisory Group into the Scheme. • TNI to investigate the possibility of upgrading the basic paving material and finishes to high quality public realm features that would link to the planned Phase 3 Streets Ahead initiative. • TNI to incorporate high quality landscaping as part of the Scheme through a comprehensive streetscaping programme. • TNI to continue to liaise with the Council regarding future analytical results of any made ground and hydrogeological groundwater monitoring. • TNI to generate a hydrogeological model in order to determine the likely impact of deep engineering structures on the surrounding water table.

9. Acknowledgements

The smooth running of a Roads Inquiry depends to a very large degree on the quality of the administrative support. We wish to express our most sincere gratitude to Ian Kernaghan, the Programme Officer, for his professional and enthusiastic support at all times throughout the entire Inquiry process.

Having a transcript of the proceedings at an Inquiry was invaluable in the preparation of the subsequent Report and we are grateful for the dedicated efforts of our Stenographer, Ms Kay Hendrick.

We also wish to record our thanks to everyone who chose to contact the Department to express their views concerning the proposal to construct the York Street Interchange.

We also acknowledge and thank everyone who attended all or part of the Inquiry and in particular the many individuals and organisations who made contributions during the three days at the Spires Conference and Exhibition Centre, Belfast, in November 2015 and at earlier events.

Lastly, and by no means least, we wish to recognise the very considerable efforts of the Transport NI Team in Belfast, together with the Staff from URS and their specialist Consultants. The desk and field research necessary to create the Environmental Statement and the other detailed documentation was enormous and having their knowledge and expertise readily available at the Inquiry was essential.



Annex A

Departmental Team, Consultants and Advisors who attended the Inquiry

Organisation	Name	Title
TransportNI	Mr. Roy Spiers	Strategic Roads Improvement Team Manager, TransportNI Eastern Division
TransportNI	Mr. Colin Pentland	York Street Interchange Project Manager, TransportNI Eastern Division
TransportNI	Mr. Colin McBurney	TransportNI Eastern Division SRI Team
Bar Library of NI	Mr. Andrew McGuinness	Legal Counsel
URS	Mr. Michael Megarry	Project Manager
URS	Mr. Russell Bissland	Traffic and Economic Team Leader
URS	Mr. Gareth Coughlin	Environment Team Leader
URS	Dr. Garry Gray	Air Quality Specialist
URS	Mr. Alf Maneylaws	Noise and Vibration Specialist
URS	Dr. Foroutan Parand	Daylight Assessment Specialist
URS	Mr. Paul Tully	Landscape Architect
URS	Mr. Pat Turley	Lands Officer
URS	Ms. Una Somerville	Associate Planner
URS	Mr. John McBride	Principal Engineer
URS	Dr. Gabriel Gallagher	Geotechnical Specialist
URS	Mr. Glenn McKay	Senior Environmental Consultant
URS	Mr. Andrew Noble	Assistant Engineer
URS	Ms. Emma Boyes	Assistant Engineer
URS	Mr. Ian Turkington	Planner
URS	Mr. Shauna Woods	Planner
Gareloch Consult Ltd.	Mr. John Fraser	Buildability Adviser

Annex B

Objectors, Agents and Others who attended the Inquiry

	Name		Company/Organisation	Address		
1	Acheson	Arthur		56 Quarry Road	Belfast	BT4 2NQ
2	Agus	Richard	Cityside Retail Park			
3	Baker	Sean	Sailortown Regeneration			
4	Barszczewska-Lyner	Elize	Belfast City Council			
5	Bell	Stephen	AECOM			
6	Benson	Pat	Sailortown Regeneration			
7	Boyd	Gareth	TROUW Nutrition	36 Ship Street	Belfast	
8	Branagh	Jackie	TransportNI HQ	10-18 Adelaide Street	Belfast	BT2 8GB
9	Brolly	Joe	Vector	Law Courts		
10	Brown	Phil	AECOM			
11	Callan	Brendan		6 Southwell Street	Belfast	BT15 1GB
12	Campbell	Sharon	AECOM			
13	Caughey	Bernadette		1 Molyneaux Street	Belfast	
14	Clark	Bernard	Translink			
15	Clarke	Gordon	Sustrans			
16	Connelly	Mark	Atkins	72 Old Channel Road	Belfast	
17	Corr	A	Roads			
18	Coyle	Briege	Belfast City Council			
19	Craig	Paddy	AECOM			
20	Daly	Eoghan		219 Drumgor Park	Craigavon	
21	Dawson	David	AECOM			
22	Dodds	Tim	AECOM			
23	Doherty	Anne	Belfast City Council			
24	Dorman	Kerri	AECOM			
25	Dorman	Emma	Amey			

26	Dougan	Aaron	ARUP			
27	Dynes	Neville		Marlborough House	Craigavon	
28	Easton	Paul		10 Limetree Lodge	Lisburn	BT28 2YU
29	Fay	Cathy	DRD			
30	Ferris	Colin	TransportNI			
31	Ferris	Colin	TransportNI HQ	10-18 Adelaide Street	Belfast	BT2 8GB
32	Fleming	Andrew		6 Abbey Gardens	Belfast	BT5 7HL
33	Flynn Davies	Emma	DRD Press Office			
34	Frazer	John	G.C.L. c/o URS			
35	Gallagher	Garbriel	AECOM			
36	Gault	Manny		County Hall	Omagh	
37	Gillespie	Michael	AECOM			
38	Gordon	Philip	Belfast City Council			
39	Gray	Pete	ARUP			
40	Hackett	Mark	City Reparo			
41	Hamill	Ivan	AECOM			
42	Hamill	M C	TransportNI HQ	10-18 Adelaide Street	Belfast	BT2 8GB
43	Hamilton	Philip	TransportNI			
44	Hamilton	Harvey	TransportNI HQ	10-18 Adelaide Street	Belfast	BT2 8GB
45	Hassard	Basil	TransportNI	Hydebank, 4 Hospital Road	Belfast	BT8 8JL
46	Heanen	Adam	TransportNI			
47	Heron	Jason		Thomas Street	Belfast	
48	Higgins	Ursula		Musgrace Manor	Belfast	
49	Hill	Declan		11 Lombard Street	Belfast	
50	Hobbs	Jonathan	NI Greenway			
51	Holmes	John	AECOM			
52	Hunter	Jordan	AECOM			
53	Jamieson	Arlene	Belfast City Council			
54	Johnston	Wesley			Belfast	

55	Keenan	Seamus		County Hall	Omagh	
56	Kelly	Ciaran	Vector	11 Mount Oriel Court	Antrim	
57	Kerr	Michael	AECOM			
58	Kerr	William	TransportNI			
59	Kirk	Andrew	AECOM			
60	Kissick	George	AECOM			
61	Komarova	Mileua		20 Glenholm Park	Belfast	
62	Langston	Michael	Cityside Retail Park			
63	Leheny	Seamus	Freight and Transport Association	109 Airport Road West	Belfast	
64	Leonard	Stephen	Belfast City Council			
65	Little	Michael		10 Glencroft Road	Newtownabbey	BT36 5GD
66	Lynch	Pascal	Vector	29 Ballyarnot Road	Antrim	BT41 4SD
67	Lynch	Kaine	TransportNI HQ	10-18 Adelaide Street	Belfast	BT2 8GB
68	Lynch	Cllr Roisin	Vetor			
69	Magill	Patrick			Magherafelt	
70	Magill	Sinead			Magherafelt	
71	Magill	Anne Marie			Magherafelt	
72	Malloy	Ciaran			Belfast	
73	Mariam	Quinn	Belfast City Council			
74	May	Peter	DRD			
75	McClenaghan	Andrew	Atkins	71 Old Channel Road	Belfast	
76	McCullough	David	TransportNI HQ	10-18 Adelaide Street	Belfast	BT2 8GB
77	McCullough	Greg	TransportNI			
78	McCurry	Catherine	Belfast Telegraph			
79	McGeown	Claire		Ladas Avenue	Belfast	
80	McGeown	Claire		Ladas Avenue		
81	McGill	John	ARUP			
82	McGill	J			Belfast	
83	McGinty	John	AECOM			

84	McGlynn	Kevin	AECOM			
85	McGrillen	Gerald	ARUP			
86	McGrillen	Gerald	ARUP			
87	McKernan	Brendan		130 Corporation Street	Belfast	
88	McKibbin	Des	NI Assembly	11A Commons School Road	Newry	
89	McLean	Brendan	Belfast City Council			
90	McLernon	Michael	TransportNI HQ	10-18 Adelaide Street	Belfast	BT2 8GB
91	McLernon	Claire	Sustrans			
92	McShane	Kevin	c/o Belfast Harbor Commissioners			
93	Miller	Doug	DRD			
94	Molloy	Conor	ARUP			
95	Monaghan	John	Irish News	113-117 Donegall Street	Belfast	
96	Montgomery	Bruce	AECOM			
97	Moore	David	AECOM			
98	Murphy	Chris	Private			
99	Murphy	Brenda		7 Little George's Street	Belfast	
100	Murray	Bobby	TransportNI	Hydebank, 4 Hospital Road	Belfast	BT8 8JL
101	Nevin	Nigel	AECOM			
102	O'Farrell	Lorraine	AECOM			
103	O'Hara	Kenneth	AECOM			
104	O'Kane	Dermoy	Belfast City Council			
105	O'Neill	Paul	Ashton Community Trust			
106	Osborne	Ruth	AECOM			
107	Patterson	Alec	AECOM			
108	Piskun	Yuri	AECOM			
109	Pollock	Stephen	TransportNI			
110	Rogers	Ann-Marie	DRD			
111	Saulters	Jonathan	TransportNI			
112	Shanks	Mike		Ranfurly Avenue	Bangor	

113	Skelly	Willie	AECOM			
114	Smith	Karen	TROUW Nutrition	37 Ship Street	Belfast	
115	Smyth	Nigel	CBI	3 Joy Street	Belfast	
116	Smyth	Aaron	AECOM			
117	Torbitt	Elizabeth		9 Little George's Street	Belfast	
118	Treston	Bryony	Vector	21 Mount Angus Park	Harold's Cross	Dublin 6
119	Tully	Paul	AECOM			
120	Turley	Pat	AECOM			
121	Walsh	John	Belfast City Council			
122	Wilson	Roisin	TransportNI			
123	Wright	John	Green Action			

