



SOUTH BELFAST PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Mr. Ciarán de Búrca,
Department for Regional Development
Rapid Transit Division
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT1 8GB

15 December 2011

Dear Ciarán

I write to you on behalf of the South Belfast Partnership Board in response to the consultation on the Route Options for the Belfast Rapid Transit system.

We understand that the initial phase is to implement a pilot network consisting of three routes in East, West and Titanic Quarter, with the intention of extension to the system into North and South in the future. However, we remain disappointed that this initial phase does not include any part of South Belfast and neither gives much consideration to the potential impacts on South Belfast Communities.

For example, the enabling measures currently planned for the City Centre, to facilitate the installation of the Rapid Transit pilot network in the future will lead to a reduction in the capacity for traffic flowing through the City Centre, to ensure that new public transport bus lanes can be installed, which will inevitably increase the traffic flow east-to-west through South Belfast. We have recently considered this issue as part of the Summer School, hosted by the South Belfast Partnership Board in collaboration with the Forum for Alternative Belfast in August, looking at development potential for the land around the proposed Bankmore Link. This work has been supported by your colleagues within Roads Service and we plan to publish the final proposals early in the New Year.

In relation to the provisional routes proposed, we would suggest that strong linkages should be made between the pilot routes and the Europa transport interchange. As the main terminus in Belfast for bus and train services, strong linkages between the Rapid Transit system and the Europa interchange would enable greater use of public transport to distribute those arriving in the City Centre around the East and West of the City. However, at present the closest City Centre halt to the interchange is to the east of City Hall on May Street or on Wellington Place, rather than the closer Howard Street, College Green or Grosvenor Avenue.

South Belfast Partnership

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We would hope that any extension of the network into South Belfast in the future would be able to address this, as well as providing strong public transport linkages to many of the key City destinations, such as Queen's University, Botanic Gardens and Ulster Museum, Windsor Park, etc. to name a few. This would not only benefit the local residents in South Belfast, but would bring greater economic benefits to the City as a whole.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne McAleese". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Anne McAleese
CEO, South Belfast Partnership Board