



Get on board

The importance of public transport
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**WEAVERS[®]
CROSS**

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This Strategy has been developed in the context of the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) Regional Development Strategy for 2035 and the draft NI Executive Programme for Government.

The DfI Strategy and the draft NI Executive Programme for Government, recognises that transport has a key role to play in developing competitive cities and regions. An efficient transport infrastructure is not only important for a successful economy but it can also help promote social inclusion and build local communities' by providing an affordable travel choice over the private car. The environmental benefits of an efficient transportation system are also fully recognised.

There is clearly a pressing need for investment in our infrastructure and public transport to cater for current demand and future growth. Weavers Cross has been recognised as having strategic importance in supporting the growth of Belfast and the rest of Northern Ireland. It will also assist Belfast City Council to deliver the Belfast Agenda through the potential creation of over 2,500 jobs contributing circa £56m GVA to the wider economy.

Investment in the new station will be the focal point of the Weavers Cross project. It will include a number of significant improvements designed to enhance all transport options, including an integrated bus and rail concourse able to accommodate increased passenger growth. The Enterprise will relocate from the current Central Station to Weavers Cross and the introduction of Glider will be in close proximity to the new station.



Tackling Congestion

Research shows that in cities with a high percentage of shared mobility (public transport, walking and cycling), the cost of transport for the community can be as much as 50% lower than cities where private car ownership dominates.

Rail makes the most efficient use of the space available. By providing high capacity, frequent services at peak hours to and from urban hubs, along strategic corridors, it plays a vital role in helping to reduce congestion, particularly in and around Belfast.

Bus priority, or better framed as bus passengers' priority, is hugely important for a modern, progressive city. Research by UK 'Greener Journeys' has shown that every pound spent on local bus priority infrastructure can generate up to £7 of benefits.

It is about changing hearts and minds in relation to bus lanes. If bus travel is more attractive then more people will choose the bus and that will free up road space for those that do need to take their car. If we want a bus service fit for modern living that will drive real modal shift, enabling people to shop, live, learn, work and visit, then we have to maximise our existing road capacity.

£1:7
ratio of benefit shown on investment in local bus priority infrastructure.



Supporting Retailers

Local bus services make it easy for people to access local town retailers; they are playing a key role in helping to build vibrant, sustainable and successful towns and cities.

Independent research carried out in Belfast by PwC showed that Metro customers are helping to boost retail sales in the city centre, with over 50% of shoppers spending over £35 per visit. In addition, over 80% of those who use bus to commute to work also shop in the city centre. UK 'Greener Journeys' research found that the bus emerges as a key mode of access to towns and city centres. Bus has the largest market share of retail and leisure trips to city centres at 33% (versus 30% for car, and 22% for walking & cycling).

80%
of those who use bus to commute to work also shop in the city centre.



Supporting the Economy

Public transport plays a key role in the global appeal of an area, as cities and regions that are easy to move around are more attractive to visitors. This in turn helps to support the role of tourism as an economic driver for Northern Ireland in terms of generating wealth, jobs, exports, civic pride and innovation.

Substantial investment in stations has led to the economic growth of other cities. By investing in Weavers Cross, the new station will create a sense of arrival, aiding inward investment, regeneration and creating development opportunities.

Investing in an integrated transport hub will lead to stronger connectivity links across Belfast. Greater connectivity will support sustainable economic growth in the economy.

Enhancing local communities and supporting social inclusion

Public transport is at the heart of communities; bus and train stations are at the centre of our towns and cities and local people see them as an important part of their community and daily life.

36% of households in Belfast do not have access to a car. Public transport provides vital services for everyone, connecting people to work, education, hospitals, health centres, shops, social activities and more. It also supports social inclusion for older people, those with disabilities and the many people who don't have access to a car, helping them to participate more fully in society and lead a more active and productive life.

In addition, good public transport links encourage commercial businesses to locate within local communities. This in turn helps generate local employment and acts as a regenerative catalyst enhancing and increasing local property values. It also fosters more social interaction, helping to create strong neighbourhood centres that are economically stable, safe and productive with a sense of 'place' that can help make an area or community unique.



Connecting Education

Every day over 55,000 pupils travel to schools around Northern Ireland using Translink bus and train services. The Ulsterbus network of school services is integrated with our rural transport services offering cost effective travel solutions for important rural and small urban communities.

Weavers Cross is located within walking distance of Northern Ireland's two world ranked universities, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University and is well placed to serve the 50,000 students who attend these. Additionally, it serves the 37,000 students who attend Belfast Metropolitan College annually.



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Council Areas Community Planning

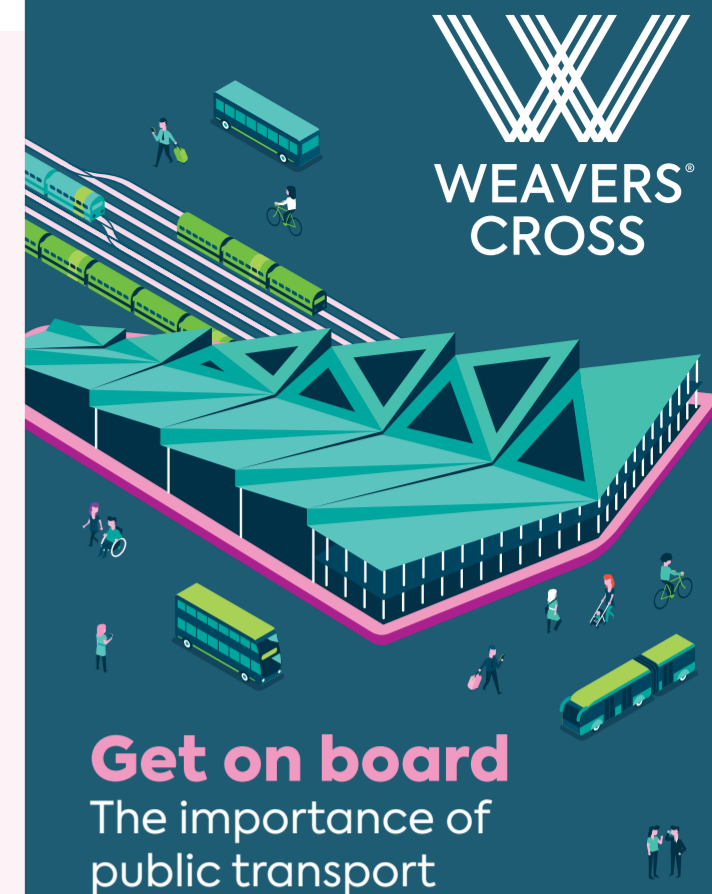
The new statutory duty of Community Planning requires the councils to engage with statutory bodies and the other relevant regional and local organisations within the community, to develop and implement a shared vision of promoting the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of the council area. Our engagement with the Community Planning Partnership will act as a bridge to link regional and local public transport.



Protecting the environment and improving local air quality and health

Efficient urban public transport offers energy efficient and low carbon mobility. In addition, it brings significant health benefits by facilitating more active lifestyles and fighting against climate change, cutting congestion and reducing air and noise pollution.

Translink's networks play a vital role in this by creating a healthier region and offers an energy efficient way to transport large numbers of people. UITP, International Association of Public Transport, reports that on average, public transport consumes three to four times less energy per passenger than cars for every mile travelled.



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Links to Health Care

Translink has worked closely with the Health and Social Care Trusts to provide a range of transport options to hospitals and health centres across NI for day appointments and visiting. Weavers Cross is uniquely positioned between two main acute hospitals, Royal Victoria and Belfast City Hospital. Research universities and hospitals often termed as Ed's and Med's are increasingly important institutions for cities. Within Belfast the Eds and Meds sectors are some of the largest employers and their economic activities foster an entrepreneurial spirit and attract additional economic growth.

Active Travel & Health

Due to our increasingly sedentary lifestyles, obesity, heart disease, strokes, certain cancers and diabetes are on the rise.

Public transport plays a central role in encouraging more active travel as most journeys require a walk or cycle to the bus stop or train station. This fits in with aspects of our public health policy, while also has the potential to transform our cities into greener, more prosperous places to live, work, learn, visit and do business.

The Belfast Bike Scheme already offers excellent sustainable links from public transport hubs offering greener and active travel options for citizens and visitors to get around the city.

