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Public Transport Reform FINAL REPORT ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION May 2010

Athleasú an Iompair Phoiblí TUARASCÁIL DEIRIDH AR CHOMHAIRLIÚCHÁN POIBLÍ Bealtaine 2010



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Contents

1.0	Executive Summary	2
2.0	Background	9
3.0	Aims of the Reform	10
4.0	Proposals for Public Transport Reform	11
5.0	Format and Structure of Consultation Events	13
6.0	Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Responses	14
	• 6.1 Performance-Based Contracts and Permits	14
	• 6.2 Continued Regulation of Bus Services	18
	• 6.3 Fare Regulation	19
	• 6.4 Role of Agency in Specifying Requirements, Awarding Contracts, Monitoring and Reporting on Performance	23
	• 6.5 Translink as Lead Supplier	29
	• 6.6 Offences and Fine Levels	32
	• 6.7 Local Public Transport Plans	35
	• 6.8 Shared Use of Passenger Facilities	37
	• 6.9 Role of Consumer Council	40
	• 6.10 Provision of Rail Services	44
	• 6.11 Integrated and Off-Vehicle Ticketing	47
	• 6.12 Land Use Planning and Developer Contributions	49
	• 6.13 Funding of Transport Advisory Bodies	51
	• 6.14 Provision of Services and Information in Languages Other than English	53
	• 6.15 Integrated Impact Assessment	55
	• 6.16 Rural Impact Assessment	57
	• 6.17 Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment	61
	• 6.18 Draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)	64
7.0	Conclusions	67
	Annexes	69
	• ANNEX A: Consultation Dates and Venues	69
	• ANNEX B: Sectoral Profile of Attendees at Public Meetings	70
	• ANNEX C: Departmental Representation at Meetings	71
	• ANNEX D: Summary of Public Meeting Evaluation Responses	72
	• ANNEX E: Stakeholder Meetings During Consultation Period	74
	• ANNEX F: List of Written Respondents	75
	• ANNEX G: Sectoral Profile of Written Responses to Public Consultation	78
	• ANNEX H: Consultation Responses by Topic	79

1.0 Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 Consultation on the Public Transport Reform proposals commenced on 9 November 2009 for a three month period, concluding on 5 February 2010. During this period the Department held a series of public meetings, met with stakeholders and received written responses from consultees.

Public Meetings

- 1.2 Eleven public meetings were held during the public consultation period. There were a mixture of morning, afternoon and evening events. A list of the dates and locations of the meetings is attached at Annex A. Attendance at the meetings ranged from 7 to 35 people, with a total of 194 attendees. A sectoral profile of the attendees is attached at Annex B. Departmental representation at the meetings is attached at Annex C, and a Summary of the Evaluation responses is attached at Annex D.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 1.3 In addition to the public meetings, the Department met with a number of stakeholders during the consultation period to discuss the reform proposals. A list of these meetings is attached at Annex E.

Publicity

- 1.4 The consultation exercise was publicised through newspaper advertisements and press releases in the Belfast Telegraph, The Irish News and the News Letter, as well as local newspapers in circulation in the areas hosting the consultation events. Three thousand flyers publicising the consultation exercise and listing the meeting venues were also produced – these were distributed to bus / railway stations and libraries. Almost 400 full Consultation Packs were issued during the consultation period, in addition to over 800 Summary Documents.

Written Responses

- 1.5 A total of 103 written responses were received to the public consultation. A list of all those who responded is provided at Annex F, and a sectoral profile of these responses is attached at Annex G. Annex H shows which responses contained replies to each consultation question.

Summary of Main Issues Raised

Performance-Based Contracts and Permits

- 1.6 Forty-nine responses commented on the proposals for performance-based contracts and innovative service permits. Most of the responses supported the proposals, with three being opposed. Issues were raised in some responses about the performance indicators to be used and the eligibility of community transport operators to apply for contracts and permits.

Continuation of a Regulated Public Transport System

- 1.7 There was widespread agreement at all eleven public meetings that services should continue to be regulated. Participants highlighted the need to ensure the continued provision of socially necessary services and felt this was best catered for within a regulated system. The need to ensure effective enforcement against unlicensed operators was also highlighted as an important element of the continuation of a regulated system.
- 1.8 The views expressed in written correspondence reflected the views expressed at the public meetings, with 43 out of the 45 responses which commented on the issue in favour of the continued regulation of bus services.

Regulation of Fares and Fare Structure

- 1.9 There was general agreement at the eleven public meetings that fares should be regulated. Participants at the meetings highlighted the need to strike a balance between making fares attractive to the passenger and covering the costs of providing the service. Forty five of the written responses commented on the proposals for fare regulation. A large majority of these responses agreed that fares should be regulated. Four responses disagreed with the proposal, most of these indicating that fares should be set by supply and demand in the market.

Role of Agency in Specifying Requirements, Awarding Contracts and Monitoring/Reporting on Performance

- 1.10 Of the 103 responses received, 56 of the responses commented on the need for a departmental agency to specify, award and monitor contracts. Most of these responses agreed that the departmental agency should be responsible for specifying public transport service requirements, awarding contracts and monitoring and reporting on operator performance.

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.11 The majority of responses supported the proposal for a public transport agency within the Department. Six of the responses did not, either because they considered it was another layer of bureaucracy or, in the case of local government representatives, because they considered it needed greater involvement of local elected representatives.

Translink Remaining Lead Supplier

- 1.12 There was strong support in the public meetings that Translink should remain the lead supplier of public transport services. Of the 103 written responses, 39 commented on the above proposal. A large majority of these responses agreed that Translink should remain as the lead supplier of services. Five of the responses did not agree that Translink should remain as lead operator, indicating that services should be made available for greater open competition.

Proposed Offences and Fine Levels

- 1.13 Of the 103 responses received, 30 responses commented on the proposed offences, fine levels and regulation of passenger conduct. The majority of these responses supported the proposals. The responses supported the proposal in relation to regulation of passenger conduct and highlighted that this is likely to enhance passenger safety and confidence. The responses indicated that the fine levels are likely to encourage good practice among operators and to deter illegal operators.

Development of Local Public Transport Plans

- 1.14 Of the 103 written responses received, 51 commented on the approach to local public transport plans. These showed strong support for the local public transport planning concept. Specific reference was made in a number of responses to the importance of consultation with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, including the section 75 groups, and the need for close involvement of local authorities in the development of the local public transport plans.

Shared Passenger Facilities and Bus Access Arrangements

- 1.15 Thirty-seven responses commented on the proposals to allow other licensed bus operators access to Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC)-owned bus stations. The majority of these responses supported the proposal to allow public transport operators other than Translink access to bus stations. The issue of health and safety, and the need for controls to be put in place in respect of those who would be given access to the stations, was highlighted in a number of responses.

Future Role of Consumer Council

- 1.16 Forty-one responses commented on the proposed future role of the Consumer Council. The majority of these responses were in general agreement that it is important to have independent consumer representation in the public transport sector and that this role could be carried out by the Consumer Council. Twelve responses did not agree with the proposed role of the Consumer Council.

Future Arrangements for Provision of Rail Services

- 1.17 Thirty-nine responses contained comments on the proposals for the future arrangements for the provision of rail services. The majority of these, and the majority of participants at the public meetings, supported the proposals. A number of responses raised issues relating to the importance of ensuring that rail services integrate with other modes of public transport, the importance of an integrated ticketing system across all modes of public transport and the need for integrated timetabling.

Integrated and Off-Vehicle Ticketing

- 1.18 Forty-six responses commented on the proposals for integrated and off-vehicle ticketing. Most of the written responses and the comments at the public meetings were supportive of the proposals. Five of the responses expressed opposition to integrated ticketing, mainly on the grounds of costs and a concern that small operators and community transport operators could be disadvantaged by having to bear the costs of such a system.

Statutory Consultee in Land Use Planning and Developer Contributions

- 1.19 Forty-three replies commented on the proposals regarding land use planning and developer contributions. In these, there was broad support for the proposal that the agency should become a statutory consultee in land use planning decisions.

Arrangements to Fund Transport Advisory Bodies

- 1.20 Thirty-nine responses commented on the proposals for the future arrangements for the funding for transport advisory bodies. The majority of these responses supported the proposals.

Service Provision and Information in Other Languages

- 1.21 Sixty-four responses commented on the provision of services and information in languages other than English. The majority of these responses were in favour, particularly in relation to the use of Irish. Some

1.0 Executive Summary

responses referred to the importance of considering the needs of minority ethnic residents and the potential problems arising from requests for services in a number of other languages.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- 1.22 Sixteen responses contained specific comments on the draft EQIA. A number of comments referred to the balance in the draft EQIA being too heavily weighted towards an analysis of the impact of the proposed organisational changes on Translink staff, and that more consideration needed to be given to the wider impact on the passengers and the community in general. Reference was also made to the gender profile for Translink as an organisation, and there was a request for a further breakdown in grades in NITHC/Translink and the NICS. Specific comment was also made about the assumption in the draft EQIA that the reform proposals would have a potential positive effect on disabled and older people. The Department will be issuing a final EQIA report to reflect the issues raised during the consultation process.

Integrated Impact Assessment

- 1.23 Of the 103 written responses received, 31 referred to the Integrated Impact Assessment. Of these, 11 responses queried the Department's decision to screen out the community safety and victims, health, human rights, social inclusion, environmental and strategic environmental issues from further assessment. Eight of the responses highlighted the decision to screen out a social inclusion assessment.

Rural Impact Assessment

- 1.24 Specific issues raised in responses relating to the Rural Impact Assessment included representations from the Community Transport Association and the Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network that they should have been identified as key stakeholders in the consultation process. Issues were also raised in relation to the importance of accessibility for older passengers and people with disabilities in rural areas.

Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment

- 1.25 Twenty-three responses made specific reference to various aspects of the Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment. Points raised included the importance of future arrangements for the delivery of transport services to the section 75 groups, particularly in relation to age and disability, and the additional costs for all operators that would be associated with the implementation of an integrated ticketing system.

Conclusions

- 1.26 Following this public consultation exercise, the Department will be recommending to the Northern Ireland Executive that a new public transport agency, within the Department for Regional Development, should be established with responsibility for the procurement of public transport services and associated regulatory arrangements. The Department will continue to consult widely and to work with key stakeholders to ensure that the implementation arrangements will deliver the policy intentions.
- 1.27 Legislative provisions to support the new arrangements will be sought. A proposed Public Transport Bill, to be taken through the Northern Ireland Assembly, will provide for the following:
- power for the Department to award contracts for the provision of public transport services, which will allow the Department to comply with EU Regulation 1370/07 and to award contracts directly to NITHC/Translink as the internal operator or through competition;
 - the creation of a public transport service permit system to facilitate the identification and provision of services which fall outside the contracted network;
 - changes to the current “Road Service Licensing” system to allow for the separation of operator licensing from the regulation of bus services/routes;
 - creation of offences in relation to the contracting and permit regimes, and the enforcement powers and powers of entry required to ensure safety and standards on the public transport network are maintained;
 - power to allow the Department to designate bus stations and depots as “shared facilities” and to specify the access conditions;
 - power to regulate the conduct of passengers in bus premises;
 - changes to the statutory role of the Consumer Council to reflect the revised arrangements, including the establishment of arrangements for co-operation with the Department on public transport matters;
 - power to allow the Department to establish, regulate and maintain integrated ticketing systems;
 - power for the Department to purchase and install on-street machines for the vending of public transport tickets and creation of offences relating to interference with these machines;
 - powers to allow the Department to acquire and dispose of land, property and vehicles for public transport purposes; and

- powers in relation to the payment of grants to transport advisory bodies and for the provision of public transport services for older people, people with disabilities and those in rural areas.

1.28 In addition, and as a result of this consultation, the Department will consider placing on the agency a statutory duty to consult on local public transport plans. This approach was influenced by a widespread demand at the public meetings and in the written responses from Councils, organisations representing rural and section 75 groupings and from stakeholders generally, for meaningful consultation and involvement in the production of the proposed local public transport plans.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On 9 November 2009 the Minister for the Department for Regional Development, Conor Murphy, launched the public consultation on the proposals for Public Transport Reform.
- 2.2 The Minister said that he wanted to make public transport people's first choice, not last resort. He explained that the current public transport legislation is outdated and that the reform proposals will ensure the provision of a customer-focused, high quality, integrated public transport system that will put a greater focus on delivering efficient, affordable services that are responsive to local needs.
- 2.3 The public consultation took place over a three month period between 9 November 2009 and 5 February 2010. A central part of the consultation process was a series of eleven public meetings held at venues across the North of Ireland.
- 2.4 Consultation packs were prepared consisting of a Summary Document, Detailed Policy Proposals, an Integrated Impact Assessment, a Draft Equality Impact Assessment, a Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment and a Question and Answer Booklet. An additional Easy Read version of the Summary Document was produced.
- 2.5 This report is an account of the consultation process and a record of:
 - the information from the 103 written responses received as part of the consultation exercise;
 - comments made by the people who came and participated in the eleven public meetings;
 - the Department's response to the views and comments received; and
 - the final policy conclusions following completion of the public consultation exercise.
- 2.6 The Department wishes to recognise and thank the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (Imtac) for the assistance they provided during the design stage of the Consultation Pack.

3.0 Aims of the Reform

- 3.1 The overall aims and objectives of the Public Transport Reform proposals are to deliver a public transport system that:-
- supports the implementation of the Regional Transportation Strategy, enabling the maximum possible integration of an effectively regulated public transport network;
 - provides safe, efficient and high quality public transport services;
 - complies with EU regulations, with contractual and funding arrangements that provide incentives to deliver an efficient, customer-focused and continually improving public transport service;
 - encourages the greater use of public transport in support of the Executive's economic, social and sustainability objectives; and
 - maximises efficiency and value for money through the use of benchmarking, continuous improvement of services and competitive tendering for some transport services, where this is appropriate.

4.0 Proposals for Public Transport Reform

- 4.1 The principal proposal for the reform of public transport is that, within the context of a regulated system, a public transport agency should be established within the Department for Regional Development. Key areas of responsibility for the proposed agency will include:

Retaining a Regulated Public Transport System

- 4.2 It is proposed that the public transport agency will have responsibility for regulation through the introduction of public transport contracts, as well as planning and policy implementation.

Local Public Transport Plans

- 4.3 As the organisation with lead responsibility for planning public transport, the departmental agency will need to consult widely with others, including new local authorities, to develop and agree local public transport plans.

Specifying Public Transport Service Requirements

- 4.4 In order to facilitate the introduction of contracts, the departmental agency will need to specify requirements for particular areas, first consulting with relevant bodies as part of the development of local public transport plans.

Introduction of Contracts

- 4.5 The agency will be responsible for securing the delivery of public transport services through performance-based contracts. Once the agency has specified its requirements, contracts will be awarded mainly directly to Translink, to design the detailed schedules and timetables to be packaged into performance-based contractual arrangements with the agency.

Monitoring of Service Delivery

- 4.6 The agency will monitor and evaluate operator performance and report annually, with the power not to renew route licences or permits as appropriate.

Innovative Service Permits

- 4.7 The granting and enforcement of innovative service permits, where gaps in the provision of services are identified, will enable private operators to continue to run stage carriage and express services.

4.0 Proposals for Public Transport Reform

Future Use of Bus Stations and Other Passenger Facilities

- 4.8 The departmental agency will have the power to allow all licensed bus operators to pick up and set down passengers in the same location through the designation of bus/rail stations as shared facilities, subject to operators meeting a set of obligatory requirements.

Funding

- 4.9 The departmental agency will provide funding by means of a subsidy to ensure that routes that are uneconomic but socially necessary continue to be serviced.

Integrated Ticketing

- 4.10 The departmental agency will be responsible for specifying and approving the requirements for a system that would join up the service network, fare and ticketing arrangements and travel information, thereby making it easier for passengers to make journeys consisting of more than one route or mode of transport. It will also need to introduce a system of off-vehicle ticketing.

5.0 Format and Structure of Consultation Events

- 5.1 There were eleven public consultation events held in Derry/Londonderry, Cookstown, Portadown, Bangor, Downpatrick, Belfast, Newry, Omagh, Ballymena, Enniskillen and Coleraine between 2 December 2009 and 21 January 2010. (See Annex A for details of the events, timings and locations). There were a mixture of morning, afternoon and evening events and each lasted for approximately two and a half hours. The consultation was publicised through newspaper advertisements in the Belfast Telegraph, The Irish News and the News Letter, as well as regional newspapers in circulation in those areas hosting consultation events.
- 5.2 The events were facilitated by members of staff from the Public Transport Reform Team. Each event was chaired by a Senior Civil Servant who was supported on the panel by members from the Public Transport Reform Team.
- 5.3 Events commenced with a presentation on the Public Transport Reform proposals. An open question and answer session then followed giving members of the audience an opportunity to comment on the reform proposals and put questions to the panel. Each event concluded with a number of smaller discussion groups where participants could engage in more detailed discussion about the reform proposals. The discussion groups were facilitated by members of the reform team and attended by members of the panel who provided clarification on the reform proposals as required.
- 5.4 The agenda for the events was as follows:

Welcome and Introduction	(10 minutes)
Presentation on Public Transport Reform Proposals	(20 minutes)
Question and Answer Session on Reform Proposals	(35 minutes)
Tea/Coffee	(10 minutes)
Workshop Discussion	(1 hour)
Summary of Workshop Discussions	(15 minutes)
Closing Remarks.	

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Responses

6.1 Performance-Based Contracts and Permits

Consultation Question

Do you agree that a system of performance-based contracts should be introduced for the public transport network, with a system of innovative service permits for other non-contracted services?

- 6.1.1 Of the 103 written responses received, 49 commented on the proposals for performance-based contracts and innovative service permits.

The Need for Contracts

- 6.1.2 Most of the responses supported the proposals for performance-based contracts – three were opposed. Many of the responses raised issues in respect of the performance indicators to be used and the need for the inclusion of social and quality-of-service measures, not just commercial measures. A few of the responses saw the introduction of such contracts as a way to improve the quality of service provided to passengers and of improving efficiency. A few other responses, mainly from organisations representing older and disabled people, were concerned to ensure that the focus on contractual performance did not lead to a situation where people with additional needs were ignored.
- 6.1.3 It was pointed out by some operators that the type of contracts and performance measures to be developed need to reflect the objectives and policy goals which the Government wants the public transport system to deliver. Operators also highlighted the need for performance indicators to be within their control. Translink suggested that the permitted services should not be allowed to undermine the viability of contracts. Other responses highlighted the need for a degree of flexibility in order to help meet the diverse needs of passengers, grow the market and assist with modal shift away from private vehicles.

The Department's Response

- 6.1.4 The Department proposes to award contracts directly to Translink for the services it provides. As required by EU Regulation 1370/2007, it will be necessary for the Department to ensure that Translink is being run efficiently and is not being overcompensated, taking account of the public service obligations that it will have to meet in continuing to provide non-commercial but socially necessary services.

- 6.1.5 Over time, as local public transport plans are developed, there is likely to be refinement to the required services as local needs emerge and are included within contracts. The extent to which additional needs can be met will naturally depend on the funding available to the Department and the agency.
- 6.1.6 The precise performance measures for contracts will be subject to negotiations as part of the contract award process, but quality of service measures, such as punctuality and reliability, are expected to be key measures. Accessibility of services will be an important prerequisite for the award of contracts. The ongoing quality of customer service, particularly for older and disabled people, should also be an important component of any performance measurement system. In awarding contracts, the agency will ensure that the performance measures for which the operator is held responsible are within its control.

Grant Aid for Community Transport

- 6.1.7 A number of the responses interpreted the focus on contracts and innovative permits in the consultation documents as implying that grant aid for the not-for-profit community transport sector was being discontinued. A few of the responses expressed concerns that the conditions of the licences under which they currently operate excludes them from providing contracted services or applying for permits unless they set up a separate commercial arm, which is not cross-subsidised by the grant aid paid by the Department. They suggested that establishing separate commercial arms is expensive for the sector and that there was a need for legislation, similar to that which operates in Britain, that would allow the not-for-profit community transport sector to be eligible for operator licences thus enabling organisations in that sector to apply for contracts or innovative permits. They suggested that this issue needs to be addressed as part of the current review of 10B licences, which is being carried out by the Department of the Environment (DoE).

The Department's Response

- 6.1.8 The focus of the consultation was on contracts and innovative service permits because those were areas where policy changes are being proposed. The policy on grant aid for the services provided by the community transport sector remains unchanged. It is proposed, however, to make explicit in the planned legislation the Department's powers to fund advisory bodies such as the Community Transport Association, which provides support to the sector.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.1.9 The Department will want to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility under the new arrangements to enable the community transport sector to provide the required range of services. It will liaise with DoE about this issue in the context of its review of the 10B licences¹.

Innovative Service Permits

6.1.10 The response from the Federation of Passenger Transport representing operators sought assurance that the process for awarding route permits would be handled properly and transparently, with the focus on passenger need. It also queried whether there would be an appeals procedure in the event that the application is refused.

6.1.11 Some operators raised concerns about the possible non-renewal of route licences/permits. Other responses sought reassurance that the impact on consumers would be assessed before a decision was taken not to renew an existing licence/permit.

The Department's Response

6.1.12 Before the responsibility for route permits is transferred from DoE, the agency will publish the criteria for granting these on its website, having consulted with stakeholders in advance. It is expected that this will build on the existing DoE criteria, with the focus on passenger need. While the continuation of the regulated system is designed to protect the incumbent operator from "cherry picking" by other operators, the unmet needs of passengers must take precedence in decisions on whether or not to award a route permit. Before a decision is reached, the agency will be required to consult widely with other affected operators, local Councils, the Consumer Council and others affected by the decision. The rationale for decisions will be explained in writing by the agency and, if necessary, a meeting can be arranged to explain this further. No formal appeal mechanism is proposed, but the applicant will be able to challenge any decisions through the courts if they still feel it is unreasonable.

¹ 10B Licences refer to exemptions which are granted by DoE from the need to hold a Road Service Licence where the bus is being used for education, religion, social welfare, recreation or activities which are of benefit to the community.

- 6.1.13 Under the public transport reforms, permits may last for up to three years rather than the annual renewal that is required under the current system. This will help give operators greater certainty over their ability to recover their investment. Because of the need to ensure that permitted operators invest in improving the services, it is not in the Department's interests to create uncertainty about renewal of licences/permits. Nonetheless, the Department would wish to make clear that operators should not assume that they hold service permits permanently, otherwise the system would no longer be regulated. In view of the lead time required to produce local public transport plans and the three year duration of the proposed permits, it is considered that the agency should give operators at least three years' notice of its intention not to renew a permit. Depending on investment patterns by particular operators, a longer period of notice may be appropriate in some cases.
- 6.1.14 The Department has no plans for the non-renewal of existing licences. All existing licences will be recognised in the new system and the issue of non-renewal of a licence/permit would only arise if the local public transport plan, which would be subject to stakeholder (including the operator) involvement, required a different package of services.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.2 Continued Regulation of Bus Services

Consultation Question

Do you agree that the public transport system should continue to be regulated?

- 6.2.1 There was strong agreement at all eleven public meetings that services should continue to be regulated. The experience in Britain was pointed to as an example of how deregulation did not work. Participants highlighted the need to ensure the continued provision of socially necessary services and felt this was best catered for within a regulated system. The need to ensure effective enforcement against unlicensed operators was also highlighted as an important element of the continuation of a regulated system.
- 6.2.2 The views expressed in written correspondence reflected the views expressed at the public meetings, with 43 out of the 45 responses which commented on the issue in favour of the continued regulation of bus services.

The Department's Response

6.2.3 The Department is satisfied that there is strong support for its proposal to continue to operate a regulated public transport system. The Department's approach to a regulated system is vindicated by a recent Office of Fair Trading report² which concluded that in many local areas of Britain, competitive pressures are insufficient to achieve best value outcomes for both bus users and tax payers.

² Office of Fair Trading (August 2009), Local Bus Services – Report on the Market Study & Proposed Decision to Make a Market Investigation Reference.

6.3 Fare Regulation

Consultation Question

Do you agree that the fares levels and fare structure for services on the public transport network should be regulated in future?

- 6.3.1 Of the 103 written responses, 45 commented on the proposals for fare regulation. A large majority of these responses agreed that fares should be regulated. Four responses disagreed with the proposal, most of these indicating that fares should be set by supply and demand in the market.

Value for Money

- 6.3.2 One of the issues raised in the responses which welcomed the regulation of fares, was the desire to ensure that passengers would get value for money. The Consumer Council highlighted that this was the top concern for public transport users in its recent survey of public transport passengers.

The Department's Response

- 6.3.3 The Department believes that the regulation of fares will help ensure that increases in fares on the public transport system will be kept to a minimum, and that services are provided as efficiently as possible.
- 6.3.4 Under the reforms, the Department will be given statutory powers to regulate fare levels and fare structures for both directly awarded contracts or agreements, and for any competitively tendered contracts. The Department may also wish to regulate fares on non-contracted services in circumstances where public subsidy is payable.

The Type of Contracts and the Allocation of Risks

- 6.3.5 The responses from some public transport operators made reference to the type of contracts which the agency will use under the new system, highlighting that the approach to fare regulation will be affected by decisions about where the revenue risk will sit (that is, whether it will be with the agency or with the operator). Another factor raised in a few of the responses was the amount of funding available to help subsidise public transport in order to help keep fare increases to a minimum.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

The Department's Response

- 6.3.6 The Department accepts that the type of contract used will impact on the approach to regulating fares and that where the operator is bearing some or all of the revenue risk, it will need greater involvement in the fare setting decisions. This is not, however, the only consideration and the agency will want to ensure that for contracts awarded directly to Translink, its companies are as efficient as possible, taking account of the public service obligations that they will be required to meet. In circumstances where contracts are awarded through competition, the approach to fare regulation (including fare increases) would be addressed as part of the contract negotiations.
- 6.3.7 It is accepted that the scope for fare increases to be kept to a minimum will, in part, depend on the funding available to help subsidise public transport services and infrastructure.

Affordability

- 6.3.8 Some responses suggested that affordability was a key issue for the public when deciding whether or not to use public transport, and that the current cost is a barrier in preventing many accessing the system. Some people also felt that concessionary travel should be extended to all services on the public transport network, and not just those operated by Translink. Comment was also made that people who qualify for concessionary travel may be unable to avail of it, if they are unable to connect to 'conventional' public transport services, for example those people who live in rural areas.
- 6.3.9 In two responses, concerns were raised about the possible impact on future fare increases of any switch from capital to revenue funding for the purchase of new buses.

The Department's Response

- 6.3.10 Recent studies carried out by the Department and consultants found that Translink's bus and rail fares generally compared favourably with those of other operators in similar areas. The proposal to regulate fares should help ensure that fare increases in the future are kept to a minimum level.

- 6.3.11 The Department acknowledges that there are existing transport operators providing services, particularly in rural areas, which are not included in the Concessionary Fares Scheme. Part of the reason for this is because they cannot provide satisfactory evidence to qualify for reimbursement by the Department. However, it may also be the case that some smaller operators have chosen not to take on the administrative requirements of the Scheme because SmartPass holders represent only a small proportion of their clientele.
- 6.3.12 Consideration has been given to extending the provision of concessionary fares to journeys taken on community transport and taxis. However, to date, these services have not been eligible for reimbursement under the Scheme as they do not meet one or more of the criteria for conditions of payment.
- 6.3.13 On 10 November 2009, the Department launched a Dial-a-Lift service. This service is similar to the Door-to-Door services which are available in urban areas, and is designed to allow individuals in rural areas, who have limited access to transport, to access local services and facilities.
- 6.3.14 Mindful that many older and disabled people in rural areas find it more difficult than their urban counterparts to access mainstream public transport, the Department, along with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, simultaneously launched the Assisted Rural Transport Scheme (ARTS). This initiative allows eligible Dial-a-Lift passengers to claim equivalent concessions to those available on services provided by Translink and other bus operators.
- 6.3.15 In relation to any switch from capital to revenue funding for new buses the Department will, as part of the forthcoming spending review, need to assess the financial implications of such a switch and explore the possible options and feasibility of such an approach with the Department of Finance and Personnel. The potential impact on fares would also need to be assessed.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

Achieving Modal Shift

- 6.3.16 Some of the responses which agreed with the regulation of fares felt that fares should be regulated in a manner which would encourage the use of public transport and contribute to the modal shift from the private car.

The Department's Response

- 6.3.17 The Department broadly agrees with these responses. The degree to which the Department can subsidise public transport depends on the funding available. It is worth noting, however, that research has shown that *“factors such as frequency, reliability and the overall perception of the journey experience are more significant than fares in encouraging modal shift”*³.

³ Commission for Integrated Transport – Chapter 5: Public Subsidy for the Bus Industry (2002) - <http://cft.independent.gov.uk/pubs/2002/psbi/psbi/05.htm>

6.4 Role of Agency in Specifying Requirements, Awarding Contracts, Monitoring and Reporting on Performance

Consultation Question

Do you agree that the departmental agency should be responsible for specifying public transport service requirements, awarding contracts and monitoring and reporting on operator performance?

6.4.1 Of the 103 responses received, 56 of the responses commented on the need for a departmental agency to specify, award and monitor contracts. Most of these responses agreed that the departmental agency should be responsible for specifying public transport service requirements, awarding contracts and monitoring and reporting on operator performance. The key points raised in the responses are discussed below.

The Need for a Departmental Agency

6.4.2 The majority of responses which referred to the matter supported the proposal for a public transport agency within the Department. Six of the responses did not, either because they considered it was another layer of bureaucracy or, in the case of local government representatives, because they considered it needed greater involvement of local elected representatives.

The Department’s Response

6.4.3 The Department considers that a public transport agency is needed because of the statutory requirement under EU Regulation 1370/2007 to award and manage contracts with Translink and, where appropriate, with other operators. It is also needed to regulate the award of permits for routes, a role which is currently performed by the Department of the Environment (DoE) but which would be more appropriately carried out alongside the agency’s other public transport functions. While the option of NITHC/Translink performing the role was considered in the Outline Business Case (OBC), it was concluded that the agency option provided greater independence and offered the prospect of a more efficient system overall.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.4.4 In addition, as noted elsewhere in this report, a variety of public transport services, funded in different ways, have evolved over the years to meet specific needs. These include Translink services, various forms of school transport, community transport, Door-to-Door Transport for older and disabled people and transport provided by the health trusts. Despite these various services, it is clear from the consultation that there are still gaps in provision. Currently, there is no organisation responsible for joining up the various services and, although the agency would be reliant on the involvement and cooperation of other statutory providers of transport in developing local transport plans, it is considered that a more unified approach is worth pursuing. Unless a new body were to be created, the only other realistic option would be to allocate the coordination role to NITHC/Translink at arms length from the Department and the Minister but its commercial remit would make this unacceptable to many of the stakeholders.

6.4.5 In terms of accountability, the agency would have governance arrangements similar to Roads Service. It would be a part of the Department for Regional Development and directly accountable to the Minister and the Assembly. When the three-tier model was first proposed in August 2006 under direct rule, it was envisaged that a Passenger Transport Authority under the control of local councils would be established. However, subsequently the Executive agreed that public transport responsibilities along with responsibility for local roads would not be devolved to Councils. The Department agrees with the responses from some of the councils and from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) that the new arrangements will only work effectively if there is close ongoing cooperation between the agency and councils on the development of local public transport plans – this issue is considered further in the section on local public transport plans. In addition, it is expected that there will be a statutory duty placed on the agency as part of the Review of Public Administration legislation to work with councils to help deliver the outcomes being sought from community planning.

Specification of Service Requirements

6.4.6 Many responses highlighted not only the need to specify the service requirements but also to specify minimum standards or targets for quality-of-service matters, including:-

- Customer service;

- Accessibility of services;
- The types of vehicles to be used and the emissions targets they must meet; and
- Driver qualifications.

6.4.7 In some responses the reference to value for money (vfm) in the award of contracts was interpreted as referring only to costs resulting in a concern that this would not take account of quality of service.

6.4.8 A few responses raised the question of whether or not a centralised departmental agency would have sufficient expertise and local knowledge to specify service requirements across all areas. The replies from Councils and other groups emphasised the need for processes to be developed to facilitate local stakeholder involvement in the development of local public transport plans. Some trade union respondents felt that the role of specifying service requirements was best placed within Translink because it already had the expertise. The impact on service requirements of other policies such as those relating to car parking, bus priority measures, and so on, was also highlighted.

6.4.9 The need for the contracts with Translink to incorporate services such as access to passenger facilities and passenger information, which as lead operator it would continue to provide, was highlighted in a few responses.

The Department's Response

6.4.10 The Department would wish to confirm that in addition to specifying requirements for public transport services in contracts, the agency will want to include a range of quality-of-service measures relating to customer service, including reliability, punctuality and accessibility. In defining accessibility requirements, the agency will take account of its policy framework set out in the Accessible Transport Strategy.

6.4.11 The Department wishes to clarify that the reference to value for money (vfm) includes quality of service. In contracting terms, the definition of value for money is not about achieving the lowest initial price: it is defined as the optimum combination of whole life costs and quality.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.4.12 In relation to the specification of service requirements, these will not be developed until after the local public transport plans are prepared and local stakeholders consulted. Although there may be a need for transitional contracting arrangements with Translink, no long-term contracts will be awarded until the local plans are prepared and consulted on with local stakeholders, including the local Councils. While the agency will need to organise itself to handle its role in local planning, it will inevitably be reliant on local operators and stakeholders to assist with developing the local plans, taking account of the requirements arising from local community plans developed by the Councils. Local public transport plans are considered further in section 6.7.

Staffing and Resources

6.4.13 A number of replies stated that the proposed agency must be adequately resourced with staff with sufficient transportation planning expertise and knowledge of the diverse needs of users to enable it to carry out its regulatory and enforcement responsibilities effectively. This was considered necessary if the agency is to work successfully with operators in order to ensure the best possible network of services is provided. Some of these responses indicated that there was a risk that the agency could become another layer of bureaucracy and not add sufficient value to the overall public transport system if it did not have the right skills and focused objectives.

6.4.14 A small number of responses expressed concern that the agency could divert resources away from front line operations and considered that the suggested staffing numbers for the agency (117) were excessive.

The Department's Response

6.4.15 The Department accepts that if the proposed agency is to perform its new roles effectively it will need to have staff with the necessary skills and expertise. It is essential that it adds value for end users. As part of the implementation arrangements, the Department will be considering carefully the roles, responsibilities and processes needed to deliver the new functions and take steps to ensure that suitably qualified personnel are appointed to fulfil each role.

- 6.4.16 In relation to the number of staff required by the agency, the estimated numbers required has been benchmarked with Integrated Transport Authorities in Britain, which perform broadly similar functions to the agency for similar sizes of populations. A total of 55 staff already employed by the Department would migrate to perform existing Departmental functions within the agency. As part of the implementation arrangements, the Department will be working with Translink to identify the number of existing resources that should transfer to the agency. As part of the design of the new arrangements the Department will continue to keep the numbers required under review in order to minimise the overall resources required, while ensuring that the agency has sufficient skilled staff to perform its regulatory functions, including those that are not currently being performed by any group but which the agency will be required to undertake to ensure the implementation of EU Regulation 1370/07.
- 6.4.17 The Department accepts that the resources assigned to front line service delivery will need to be maximised under the new arrangements. It is essential, however, that the tactical support, regulation and enforcement of front line services are not neglected, otherwise end users will ultimately suffer. The feedback from the consultation suggests that there is scope to join up and improve services but currently there is no public body which could perform this role.

Monitoring of Operator Performance

- 6.4.18 A number of responses raised the question of what action would be taken in the event of ongoing poor performance by operators.

The Department's Response

- 6.4.19 In line with best practice in the award and management of contracts, the Department will want to ensure that contracts for public transport include incentives and penalties to encourage operators to carry out their contractual obligations for the benefit of users. The Department will want to ensure that the delivery of such obligations are monitored on an ongoing basis in order to ensure an ongoing focus on those elements of the service that are of importance to users. Such monitoring should not be overly bureaucratic for the agency or for operators and should, ideally, utilise information that a well run operator would require to deliver its contracted services successfully.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.4.20 Generally, such contractual arrangements work best if the client (in this case the agency) works in partnership with operators. Nonetheless, in the event of consistent underperformance, the agency would want to be able to apply some form of penalty. The exact nature of incentives and penalties will depend on the contracts that are eventually negotiated with operators. The degree of flexibility to apply incentives and penalties will depend on the resources available to the agency for public transport.

6.5 Translink as Lead Supplier

Consultation Question

Do you agree that Translink should continue to be the lead supplier of public transport services?

6.5.1 Of the 103 written responses, 39 commented on the above proposal. A large majority of these responses agreed that Translink should remain as the lead supplier of services, most welcoming the proposed mix of providers, which some respondents considered was necessary to meet the diverse needs of users. Others felt that there should be more opportunities for private operators to become involved in the provision of public transport services. Five of the responses did not agree that Translink should remain as lead operator, indicating that services should be made available for greater open competition.

Translink’s Role as Lead Provider

6.5.2 There were many positive comments on the performance and experience of Translink to date. Some responses highlighted the opportunities for improved efficiency through greater use by Translink of the bus fleets available from private operators, particularly at peak commuting time, which coincides with the times for school transport. Some responses indicated that more clarification was required on the amount of services which would be made available through open competition in the future. The future role of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) and Ulsterbus Tours was raised in some of the responses.

The Department’s Response

6.5.3 The Minister has already said that Translink will retain its position as the main operator of public transport and that the services will not be privatised. Under the new regime, these services would form the basis of the directly awarded contract(s) between Translink and the public transport agency under the terms of EU Regulation 1370/2007. It will be necessary for Translink’s efficiency to be assessed on an ongoing basis to ensure that it complies with the Regulation and is not being over compensated.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

- 6.5.4 The Department has no plans for the introduction of competition for public transport services, other than for Bus Rapid Transit in Belfast and for new services such as park and ride. When local public transport plans are developed, a somewhat different mix of service requirements may emerge, particularly if there is greater joining up of services between the different funders and providers of public transport. This is not expected to impact on Translink's role as lead public transport provider. It is likely, however, that certain uneconomic rural services will continue to be better provided through a grant support mechanism.
- 6.5.5 The Department also recognises that private sector operators have invested heavily in new fleet and systems over recent years. In the future, there will be opportunities for these operators to expand their services through the permit system, the tendering of the opportunities outlined above and perhaps also providing assistance to Translink at peak commuting times.
- 6.5.6 It is envisaged that NITHC's role as the holding company for the three Translink subsidiaries would continue. In relation to Ulsterbus Tours, given NITHC's statutory duty to act commercially, it is considered that there is no impediment to its continued operation. Its contribution to the financial performance and the accounting arrangements as part of the NITHC group needs to be transparent.

Better Integration

- 6.5.7 Some of the responses made reference to the opportunities to improve integration, with some pointing to the need for integration between Translink's services and those provided by other operators. A few of the responses highlighted that some aspects of integration are more easily achieved if there are fewer operators.

The Department's Response

6.5.8 The Department agrees that, under the new arrangements, services should be better integrated. To this end, it intends to designate Translink's bus and rail stations (and bus stops) as "shared facilities" with other licensed public transport providers. The Department also plans to ensure that the Translink call centre provides travel information to customers of all public transport services (not just those of Translink). Improved integration of timetables between the different transport modes and service providers will be a key consideration as part of the development of local public transport plans. Integrated ticketing is addressed in Section 6.11.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.6 Offences and Fine Levels

Consultation Question

What are your views on:

- the proposed offences and fine levels to support the contracting/ permit regime;
- the continuing offences and fine levels for operator licensing, railway byelaws and conduct on buses; and
- the proposed powers to regulate passenger conduct in bus premises?

6.6.1 Of the 103 responses received, 30 responses commented on the proposed offences, fine levels and regulation of passenger conduct. The majority of these responses supported the proposals.

6.6.2 The responses supported the proposal in relation to regulation of passenger conduct and highlighted that this is likely to enhance passenger safety and confidence. The responses indicated that the fine levels are likely to encourage good practice among operators and to deter illegal operators and should be reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to pose a sufficient deterrent.

6.6.3 Some responses raised issues in relation to:

- the need for effective enforcement in relation to the offences;
- the potential anomaly of breaches of contracts being dealt with as commercial disputes or through the contract whilst breaches of permits were being dealt with as offences and the impact of this when considering repute of operators;
- the disqualification of operators;
- the enforcement of bus lanes; and
- the introduction of a Traffic Commissioner.

The Department's Response

6.6.4 The proposed offences and fine levels for the enforcement of the contracting/permit system and passenger conduct are based on those already in place for the licensing system and were generally supported in the responses to the consultation. The Department is now considering the equivalent fine levels in the Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Bill which obtained Royal Assent on 22 January 2010. These fine levels provide a more up-to-date comparator for the offences proposed for the permit system. As such, the Department proposes to follow these fine levels, which results in some differences to those originally proposed:

Offence	Fine Level
Conditions as required to be notified	Level 4 (currently £2500)
Forgery of a permit	Statutory maximum (currently £5000) on summary conviction; or On conviction on indictment, a term not exceeding two years.
False statements	Level 4 (currently £2500)

6.6.5 The Department recognises the importance of adequate and effective enforcement in relation to these offences to ensure that standards are maintained on the public transport network.

6.6.6 In relation to the disqualification of operators, it is proposed that the Department will take a statutory power to allow it to disqualify operators from holding a permit, where an operator has had a permit revoked.

6.6.7 The Department considers that any breach of contract would be most appropriately dealt with in the terms of the contract. It is envisaged that the DoE will consider any breaches of contract as well as any offences committed by an operator when considering the repute element of the operator's licence.

6.6.8 The enforcement of bus lanes is currently being considered as part of the proposals for bus rapid transit. Any legislative provisions required for the enforcement of bus lanes will be taken forward as part of the legislative provisions required to enable bus rapid transit.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

- 6.6.9 The Traffic Commissioners in Britain are responsible for licensing operators of heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles; registering local bus services; and taking action against drivers of HGVs and PSVs. There are seven traffic commissioners in Britain. Most of the functions in relation to operator licensing (both freight and PSV) are delegated to the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), which is a non-departmental public body.
- 6.6.10 The above functions are carried out by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA), which is an agency of the Department of the Environment. Licensing and enforcement of freight and bus operators would continue to be a function of the DVA. The proposed public transport agency would be responsible for specifying and contracting for public transport services and granting permits for other public transport services outside of the contracted network. Given that public transport services are to continue to be regulated, the Department does not consider that the introduction of a Traffic Commissioner is required to regulate public transport services here.
- 6.6.11 The responsibility for the conduct of passengers on buses will be retained by the Department of the Environment, as they have overall responsibility for the regulation of public service vehicles.

6.7 Local Public Transport Plans

Consultation Question

What are your views on the best approach to develop local public transport plans and who needs to be involved?

- 6.7.1 Of the 103 written responses received, 51 commented on the approach to local public transport plans. These showed strong support for the local public transport planning concept. The need to ensure local input was highlighted, with some responses making the point that local knowledge would be critical to ensuring that the local public transport plans address the diverse needs of local users.
- 6.7.2 It was also argued that the formulation of plans by the proposed public transport agency should involve consultation with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, with particular care being taken to ensure that the views of groups with specific needs such as older people, children and young people, and people with disabilities are taken into account. In addition, the importance of ensuring that the needs of rural transport users are identified was emphasised. The need for rural proofing of the local transport plan in order to avoid negative impacts upon rural communities was highlighted in some of the responses.
- 6.7.3 Given the number of government departments involved in providing public transport services, there were calls for closer co-operation between the relevant central government departments, local councils, transport operators, and the various agencies and groups representing local users and communities in order to ensure that the local public transport plan is as comprehensive as possible and maximises the opportunities to achieve value for money. The need for alignment with the Regional Development Strategy and the Regional Transportation Strategy was also highlighted.
- 6.7.4 The responses from many of the district councils and from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association stressed the importance of the close involvement of local authorities in the formulation of the local public transport plans. This would be particularly important when local authorities took on responsibility for community planning and land use planning responsibilities arising from the review of public administration. The interdependency between these different plans was emphasised. A few responses suggested that the responsibility for local public transport plans should be devolved to local councils while several others considered that Translink should have responsibility.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

- 6.7.5 The need to control car parking as part of the local public transport plans was also highlighted as a key element in achieving modal shift from private cars to public transport.
- 6.7.6 Finally, in relation to resources, some responses highlighted the need for sufficient funding to be available to cover the costs of the required services.

The Department's Response

- 6.7.7 The departmental agency will have lead responsibility for developing local public transport plans, but will be required to consult and work with a wide range of other organisations, such as district councils, other government departments, transport providers, community transport groups and local users to ensure that all relevant views are taken on board. Arrangements will need to take into account district councils' responsibilities for community planning and for land use planning under the review of public administration.
- 6.7.8 As it will be responsible for implementing them, the Department considers that it should remain responsible for developing and agreeing local public transport plans. However, in view of the importance of securing local government input and involvement in public transport planning, the Department will consider placing a duty on the agency to consult with district councils on local public transport plans. This duty would be part of a wider duty on the Department to consult with local authorities on transport plans.
- 6.7.9 The Department is aware of the potential impact of car parking policy on modal shift. The Department is currently reviewing its sustainable transport policies. The agency will operate within policy guidelines set by the Department.
- 6.7.10 The resources available for public transport will depend on the funding made available at each spending round.

6.8 Shared Use of Passenger Facilities

Consultation Question

Do you agree that the departmental agency should have statutory powers to designate passenger facilities as “shared facilities” and to specify the access arrangements and charges for the use of the facilities by other public transport operators?

- 6.8.1 Of the 103 written responses received, 37 responses commented on the proposals to allow other licensed bus operators access to NITHC-owned bus stations. The majority of these responses supported the proposal to allow public transport operators other than Translink access to bus stations.
- 6.8.2 Some responses indicated that shared facilities of this nature would allow focus to be placed on quality of service provision where customers can expect their travel needs to be met at a known location with the right facilities to ensure passenger comfort and safety.

Who will be given access to stations?

- 6.8.3 The concerns that were expressed centred on health and safety issues and the need for controls to be put in place in respect of those who would be given access to the stations.

The Department’s Response

6.8.4 The Department can confirm that access would be carefully controlled and, in the main, would be made available to operators delivering licensed stage carriage services which are complementary to or included in the contracted network. It is not envisaged that access would be made available routinely for operators engaged in private hire type operations which do not form part of the public transport network. Consideration must also be given to ensuring appropriate access for community transport operators, particularly where they are setting down or picking up older and disabled people to connect with other services.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

At what cost will access be provided?

- 6.8.5 Many of the replies highlighted the need for the charges for access to be transparent and not to be used as additional subsidy for Translink. Other respondents highlighted the need for the additional costs incurred by Translink in providing access to be recoverable.

The Department's Response

- 6.8.6 The agency will need to ensure both NITHC/Translink and private operators benefit from the opening up of stations to as many passengers as possible. From a Translink perspective it has to be recognised that costs will be incurred in providing services to other operators. The agency will ensure transparency in this area by ensuring that Translink charges reflect reasonable costs incurred by Translink in providing access for other licensed operators.

Capacity and Health and Safety Issues

- 6.8.7 The safety of passengers, drivers and station staff was raised in some responses. It was pointed out that the capacity of stations will need to be carefully considered along with measures to ensure that stations are only used by licensed and properly insured operators.

The Department's Response

- 6.8.8 The Department recognises that in seeking to open up bus stations to improve service delivery, the safety of the travelling public, bus station staff and drivers must be a priority. Applications for access will be carefully assessed using clear criteria based on usage type, capacity and health and safety considerations. The rules for access, including for example any training needs or insurance requirements, will need to be made clear to all parties and enforced. The agency will also consider cases where capacity issues are preventing operators from gaining access and address these issues with NITHC/Translink. In some cases the provision of capital funding for the improvement of facilities to meet the local needs may be appropriate if a business case can be made and funding is available. Access to shared bus stations by multiple operators is the norm in other jurisdictions and, therefore, it is considered that most problems can be adequately dealt with.

Integrated Service Delivery

- 6.8.9 A number of the responses indicated that wider access to stations was essential for a truly integrated public transport network. Some also highlighted the need for integrated ticketing and shared passenger information systems to be in place to complement the opening up of bus stations.

The Department's Response

- 6.8.10 The Department agrees that wider access to bus stations for all licensed operators is required to help facilitate the delivery of a more integrated approach to public transport service provision. In relation to integrated ticketing and passenger information this issue will be considered as part of a wider review of the technology required for public transport in the future – see section 6.11.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.9 Role of Consumer Council

Consultation Question

Do you agree with the proposed future role of the Consumer Council, which would involve the Council in:

- advising the Department on the consumer interests in relation to the development of public transport policy and fares;
- providing comments on service requirements specifications for public transport contracts and innovative service permit applications;
- representing the consumer interest in unresolved complaints about the services provided by the departmental agency and by operators; and
- agreeing arrangements for co-operation between the Council and the agency on public transport matters of shared interest.

6.9.1 Of the 103 responses that were received, 41 responses commented on the proposed future role of the Consumer Council. The majority of these responses were in general agreement that it is important to have independent consumer representation in the public transport sector and that this role could be carried out by the Consumer Council. Twelve responses did not agree with the proposed role of the Consumer Council.

Advising the Department on the consumer interests in relation to the development of public transport policy and fares

6.9.2 Some replies voiced concerns regarding the extent to which the Consumer Council represents all transport users and whether it has the expertise to represent consumer interests in the transport sector. The responses from the community transport sector, transport user groups and the business sector indicated that the Consumer Council could take up the opportunity to engage further with those sectors. This would enable the Consumer Council to draw on the expertise available and would assist the Council to fulfil its new wider role in working with the agency to help represent the views and needs of consumers. The need for the Consumer Council to remain independent from the Department and agency was stressed in a few of the responses. Two of the replies suggested setting up additional arrangements, such as an advisory body or watchdog, to supplement the Consumer Council role. Some of the responses which raised this issue suggested that partnering arrangements would assist

in providing additional resources to allow the Council to perform its role effectively.

The Department's Response

6.9.3 The Department will continue to work with the Consumer Council to develop arrangements which will further enhance the existing consultative arrangements in the area of public transport. Work has already commenced on clarifying arrangements between the Department, the Consumer Council and Translink for the consideration of passenger fares. The Department will also engage with the Consumer Council on how its consultative arrangements with consumer, business and community groups could be enhanced in order that the Council can provide as fully representative advice on consumer matters to the agency as possible. The Department does not consider that it is necessary to set up any other advisory groups, as it has access to advice from other sources notably from Imtac on transport matters relating to older and disabled people and from the Community Transport Association on community transport matters. It will also be important for the agency itself to engage directly with consumers and community groups in order to understand better the public transport issues that are of importance to users and potential users.

Providing comments on service requirements, specifications for public transport contracts and innovative service permit applications.

- 6.9.4 Although there was general support for the role envisaged for the Consumer Council in providing advice on service requirements, specifications for public transport contracts and innovative service permit applications, a few of the replies again queried whether the Council had the expertise to provide this service.
- 6.9.5 The view that the Consumer Council needs to remain independent from the Department and agency was stressed in a few of the responses. Two of the replies suggested, as in paragraph 6.9.2, the setting up of additional arrangements, such as an advisory body or watchdog, to supplement the Consumer Council.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

The Department's Response

- 6.9.6 The Consumer Council has long experience of representing consumer interests on a wide range of issues, including public transport. The Department considers that the Consumer Council is best placed to continue to fulfil its statutory role with regard to providing comments on applications from licensed operators for route permits. As noted above, the Consumer Council will have the opportunity to develop its ongoing liaison arrangements with other groups in order to help fulfil its role. Its involvement with such groups and in the process of preparing local public transport plans should enable it to represent the consumer interest in providing input to the agency on the specification of contracts.
- 6.9.7 It should be noted however that the agency will also consult widely within the transport and community sector and with local councils on the development of local public transport plans which will provide the basis for contracts for the required services in local areas.

Representing the consumer interest in unresolved complaints about the services provided by the departmental agency and by operators

- 6.9.8 The majority of responses did not address this issue in any detail. Some did indicate that the Consumer Council may not be the first port of call for people with transport problems. A few considered that the Council should have more decision making powers. The replies from some public transport operators stressed the need for the operator to be given the opportunity to put any problems right before a complaint is referred to the Consumer Council.

The Department's Response

- 6.9.9 In relation to complaints under the new arrangements, it is proposed that the Consumer Council would continue to represent the consumer interest in unresolved complaints, about either the departmental agency, when it is established, or any licensed operator providing services under contract or permit. These arrangements are likely to be similar to those already set out in Translink's formal complaints procedures and will be developed in consultation with the Consumer Council during the design phase of the agency's functions.

Agreeing arrangements for co-operation between the Council and the agency on public transport matters of shared interest

6.9.10 Notwithstanding the issues raised earlier, the responses recognised the valuable role the Consumer Council could play in representing the voice of users under the proposed new arrangements. A few responses expressed doubts about whether the Consumer Council could represent the consumer effectively at all three levels (the policy, tactical/planning and operational).

The Department's Response

6.9.11 The requirement for the departmental agency to develop local public transport plans in consultation with other public bodies highlights the need for local consumer and community groups to be consulted as part of this process. It is envisaged that the Consumer Council will play a key role in this process.

6.9.12 In addition, recognising the shared interest between the departmental agency and the Consumer Council in relation to the services provided to public transport users, it is proposed that they both would have a new statutory duty to make arrangements to ensure consistent treatment of matters that affect both organisations and to co-operate and exchange information (but not commercially sensitive information). It is envisaged that the detailed arrangements would be set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations. The Consumer Council would also have a statutory duty to produce a forward work programme which would be sent to the Department in draft form for comment before publication. This approach will help ensure cooperation on matters of shared interest but will not compromise the Council's independence. These obligations will be similar to that which is already in place for water and energy.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.10 Provision of Rail Services

Consultation Question

Do you agree with the proposals on the future arrangements for the provision of rail services?

- 6.10.1 It should be noted that under the reform proposals there will be no significant changes from the existing arrangements to how rail services are provided in the future. Due to the relatively small scale of the rail network (some 200 miles of track) it is proposed that rail infrastructure and the operation of rail services should continue to be managed by Northern Ireland Railways (NIR). The main change to existing arrangements will be the inclusion of rail services as part of the contracts directly awarded to Translink in order to comply with the requirements of EU Regulation 1370 / 2007.
- 6.10.2 Of the 103 written responses received, 39 commented on the proposals for the future arrangements for the provision of rail services. The majority of these and the majority of participants at the public meetings supported the proposals. The key points raised in the responses are discussed below.

Integrating Services

- 6.10.3 A number of responses referred to the importance of ensuring that rail services integrate with other modes of public transport and said that shared services at rail stations would encourage integration between bus and rail services. Other responses also included references to the requirement for an integrated ticketing system across all modes of public transport and the need for integrated timetabling.

The Department's Response

6.10.4 The Department fully acknowledges that better integration across all aspects of public transport service delivery will be critical to ensuring that public transport becomes more attractive to customers. The Department plans that Translink will continue to operate both rail and bus services and that the opportunity, therefore, exists to build on the existing integration of services. In order to improve integration a number of key issues will need to be addressed including the planning of the bus and rail service network, fare and ticketing arrangements and the provision of customer information. These issues will all be addressed in the contracts required under the proposed new arrangements. As highlighted in a number of responses, if proper integration is to be achieved, future arrangements will have to consider how different modes of transport are "linked up" to improve the customer experience. This will include considering how rail and bus facilities can be utilised to encourage multi modal usage by passengers and the operation of an integrated ticketing system. Integrated ticketing is discussed in more detail in Section 6.11.

Expansion of the Railway Network

6.10.5 A number of responses referred to the focus of the rail network in Northern and Eastern areas and the lack of provision of rail services in rural areas.

The Department's Response

6.10.6 The Department's current priority is to ensure that the existing rail network is maintained and improved. In addition, Translink has recently placed a contract for 20 new trains, due for delivery in 2011/12. This will complete the modernisation of the fleet and put Translink in a position, in conjunction with the agency, to increase frequency of services in areas where there is sufficient demand. There are currently no proposals to extend the existing rail network. The Department is in contact with Northern and Southern councils about the feasibility of exploring options for extending the rail line into the West of the province. However, there are no specific plans currently available and any such proposals will need to meet necessary criteria for Government funded projects. Similar criteria will apply to any proposal to expand the existing rail network, including, potentially, to Airports.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

Potential for Freight on Rail

6.10.7 A number of responses raised the issue of the potential for using the rail network for freight.

The Department's Response

6.10.8 The Department is currently working with its colleagues in the Department of Transport and representatives from the freight sector on a small number of priority areas to promote a sustainable freight sector. One of the priority areas identified is to consider rail freight and other alternatives. The working group should report later this year.

Link of Reform Proposals to other Departmental Strategies

6.10.9 Some comment was provided on the necessity for rail to be considered in a wider context to include integrated transport, land use planning, economic development, tourism, and so on.

The Department's Response

6.10.10 The Regional Transportation Strategy, which is also the responsibility of the Department for Regional Development and is currently under review, will aim to present a fresh sustainable direction for transportation and will address economic, environmental and societal themes. Any new strategy is likely to suggest making better and smarter use of our roads and railways, reduce our environmental impact, maintain our roads and railways better, improve accessibility and safety, support communities and our economy. All of this will have to be realised against a background of anticipated severe constraints on public expenditure.

6.11 Integrated and Off-Vehicle Ticketing

Consultation Question

Do you agree that there is a need for integrated and off-vehicle ticketing across all forms of public transport?

- 6.11.1 Of the 103 written responses received, 46 commented on integrated ticketing. Most of these written responses and the comments at the public meetings were supportive of the concept, although some drew attention to the many practical difficulties involved in implementing such a system, including doubts about the value of on-street ticket machines. Five of the responses expressed opposition to it, mainly on the grounds of costs and a concern that small operators and community transport operators could be disadvantaged by having to bear the costs of such a system. The costs and who would be responsible for these was often raised in the responses which were otherwise supportive of such a system. Some community transport providers felt that increasing network coverage and accessibility was a greater priority than integrated ticketing.
- 6.11.2 The problem of apportioning the fares between multiple operators was also highlighted, with some responses pointing out that the more operators involved, the more difficult the system becomes to implement. Some operators stressed that the scheme should be voluntary, while others considered that all operators should be required to accept such systems, particularly where concessionary fares are involved.
- 6.11.3 People attending the meetings and the written responses from many organisations, particularly those representing older and disabled people, stressed the need to ensure that such a system would be user friendly and accessible in a variety of ways to suit user needs.
- 6.11.4 A few responses also highlighted the need for greater on-line booking methods and suggested that improved integration of services was also required in order to achieve the full benefits of integrated ticketing.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

The Department's Response

- 6.11.5 Integrated ticketing has the potential to make public transport more attractive to users by making it easier to travel using a single ticket where the journey involves using more than one bus or rail journey or using services provided by different operators. It could also be attractive to some operators by reducing or eliminating cash handling by drivers and by enabling faster boarding by passengers. As highlighted in some responses, the technical solutions can be quite complex and would require considerable investment. As part of a wider review of the technology required for public transport in the future, the Department plans to undertake a study into the need for and feasibility of integrated ticketing. Any such system will need to be sufficiently flexible to handle the needs of the various types of users, including disabled and older people. If such a system is to be implemented, it may be mandatory for operators with large scale contracts but the Department does not consider that small operators or community transport operators should be excluded from qualifying for permits or grant aid because they are not part of the system.

6.12 Land Use Planning and Developer Contributions

Consultation Question

Do you agree that the new agency should become a statutory consultee in land use planning decisions, and should be able to secure developer contributions for public transport?

6.12.1 Forty-three replies commented on the proposals regarding land use planning and developer contributions.

The Agency as a statutory consultee in the Planning Process

6.12.2 There was broad support for the proposal that the agency should become a statutory consultee in land use planning decisions. Emphasis was placed on the need for the agency to ensure that priority was given to public transport provisions during the planning stage. The need for integration of land use planning and transportation planning was recognised as important in ensuring modal shift and achieving sustainable travel patterns.

6.12.3 There was recognition that Planning Service and developers did take account of public transport provision in the planning process and that in some cases developer contributions had been secured. There was, however, some criticism of the current system which some respondents believed to be fragmented.

The Department’s Response

6.12.4 At present the Department of the Environment’s Planning Service is reviewing the list of bodies which are currently designated as statutory consultees in the planning process. These changes will be legislated for in due course. It is the Department for Regional Development’s intention to indicate to the Planning Service the types of development the public transport agency would wish to be consulted upon and seek to be included as a statutory consultee as part of the Department for Regional Development.

Securing Developers Contributions

6.12.5 Although the majority of the responses received on the matter supported the need for developer contributions towards the costs of public transport, a few responses raised concerns that recouping the costs from developers

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

could become an impediment to future economic development and could make some commercial developments unviable.

The Department's Response

6.12.6 It is envisaged that having been consulted on appropriate planning applications the public transport agency, in conjunction with Roads Service, will be in a position to provide advice to developers on the potential transportation impacts of the development. In association with Planning Service and other statutory consultees informed decisions can then be taken by the Planning Service as to what contribution for public transport provision, if any, should be made by the developer. In making decisions to require a contribution from developers towards public transport, account will need to be taken of the Executive's wider economic policies so that Government-supported economic development projects are not undermined by the requirement for developer contributions.

6.13 Funding of Transport Advisory Bodies

Consultation Question

Do you agree that the Department should formalise and take forward legal arrangements to provide funding to transport advisory-type bodies?

- 6.13.1 Of the 103 written responses received, 39 commented on the proposals for the future arrangements for the funding for transport advisory bodies. The vast majority of these supported the proposals
- 6.13.2 One response disagreed with the proposal on the basis that funding for services provided by or under the auspices of the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities and the Rural Transport Fund should be provided through conventional bus services. One response said that clarity is needed on the impact of the proposal on existing services and transport advisory bodies currently funded by the Department, including Shopmobility and Imtac. There was also a suggestion that advisory bodies should receive funding from membership fees.
- 6.13.3 The key points raised in the responses are discussed below.

Future Funding Arrangements

- 6.13.4 Some responses commented that funding to the Community Transport Association should not be restricted to support services for programmes, such as the Rural Transport Fund and the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities.

The Department's Response

- 6.13.5 There are currently no plans to extend the funding arrangements for the Community Transport Association to support services beyond those currently provided for under the Rural Transport Fund and the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities. The Department is conscious of the need to ensure that funding for front line services is maximised. It is, however, necessary to ensure that such services are planned and delivered effectively and this often requires specialised support to be available to enable this. For this reason, the Department is seeking specific powers to enable it to fund bodies such as the Community Transport Association.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

Gaps in Service Provision

6.13.6 A number of responses commented on gaps in existing service provision, particularly in the more remote rural areas. In addition some responses highlighted the difficulties in connecting community transport services with mainstream services.

The Department's Response

6.13.7 The development of local public transport plans will be an important element in helping to identify these issues in more detail and to explore possible solutions. The local public transport plans will focus on user needs within local areas and will be informed by dialogue with a range of stakeholders including local Councils, Roads Service, community groups, representatives of private operators and the community transport sector. An assessment of existing service provision by all of the providers including Translink, other licensed private operators and community / rural transport organisations will help identify any gaps in service delivery and highlight potential opportunities to improve or join up services to make them as efficient as possible. Further detail in relation to local public transport plans is provided in the response in Section 6.7.

6.14 Provision of Services and Information in Languages Other than English

Consultation Question

Do you believe that service provision and information should be provided in languages other than English by Translink and other operators, where a clear demand is evident?

- 6.14.1 Of the 103 written responses received, 64 commented on the provision of services and information in languages other than English. The majority of these responses were in favour, particularly in relation to the use of Irish. The needs of minority ethnic residents were also highlighted in some responses. The potential problems arising from requests for services in a number of other languages were highlighted in one response. Five responses highlighted the potential costs involved in providing such services.
- 6.14.2 Many of these responses highlighted the obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Sixteen responses considered that provision of services and information should not be wholly dependent on demand but should be more readily available so that the wider community becomes aware of the availability of a bilingual service. Some educationalists highlighted the benefits of this for children who are being educated through the medium of Irish. Some responses also considered that transport operators' staff should be trained and supported to attempt to converse in Irish with children attending Irish-medium schools and with people living in Irish speaking areas. The difficulty of establishing when there was sufficient demand for services in other languages was highlighted in some responses.
- 6.14.3 Many of these responses also suggested that Irish language signage and information should be available on the same basis as English, for example on bus and train timetables, in stations, at bus/train stops, on the vehicles and on bus passes/tickets. Some responses said that public announcements in stations and on vehicles should be made bilingually in English and Irish.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

The Department's Response

- 6.14.4 The Department will continue to make every effort to ensure that it fulfils its obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Charter is an International Convention designed to protect and promote regional or minority languages. As part of the process of developing local public transport plans, the Department will take account of the requirements for services in languages other than English and of the need to ensure that services can be accessed by minority ethnic people. Where appropriate, contracts with operators can take account of the requirements for services and information in languages other than English. As the lead operator, Translink has already taken steps to provide information to those customers who wish to access bus and rail information in Irish and has made good progress, including:
- Simultaneous translation of all content on the Translink website into Irish and other languages;
 - Provision of selected passenger information, publications and timetable information at bus stops in Irish;
 - Provision of bilingual English/Irish signage at selected locations; and
 - Development of links with Irish medium schools and the provision of information in Irish to promote sustainable travel and public safety.

6.15 Integrated Impact Assessment

Consultation Question

Do you have any views on the conclusions reached by the Department to screen out from further assessment the implications of public transport reform in respect of:

- (a) Community Safety and Victims;
- (b) Health;
- (c) Human Rights;
- (d) Social Inclusion;
- (e) Environmental; and
- (f) Strategic Environmental?

6.15.1 Of the 103 written responses received, 31 referred to the Integrated Impact Assessment. Of these, eleven responses queried the Department’s decision to screen out the community safety and victims, health, human rights, social inclusion, environmental and strategic environmental issues from further assessment.

6.15.2 Eight of these responses highlighted the decision to screen out a social inclusion assessment, with reference made to the possibility of services on socially necessary routes being withdrawn because of a lack of profitability.

6.15.3 In relation to health, mention was made of the possibility of a shared transport resource for accessing public health services.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

The Department's Response

- 6.15.4 The Department's screening exercise followed standard government procedure and involved consultation with key advisors, such as the Policy Unit of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department of Social Development. In the case of criteria screened out, such as health or social Inclusion, the Department believes that this reform programme will not have any specific impact on these issues. In the longer term as local public transport plans are developed, the impact on some of these areas can be more accurately assessed and the screening exercise repeated based on the more specific proposals. It was also considered that there was significant crossover between social inclusion and rural issues, so relevant social issues were covered by the rural impact assessment.
- 6.15.5 With regard to the screening of particular issues, it was usually the case that the points made related to the relationships between those issues and public transport in general, as opposed to the specific proposals of this reform programme.
- 6.15.6 Any arrangement in relation to the sharing of transport resources for accessing public health services would be dependent on co-operation with the Health Trusts on the sharing of those resources.
- 6.15.7 The proposals make clear that there will still be a requirement for unprofitable services supporting socially necessary routes to continue to be operated. These reforms do not bring forward any specific proposals to change this and, therefore, it is not possible to carry out an impact assessment at this stage. A few of the responses were concerned that the reference in the consultation documents to contracts and permits interpreted this as meaning that grant aid for community transport would cease. The Department would wish to clarify that this is not the case.

6.16 Rural Impact Assessment

Consultation Question

Do you have any general comments on the approach that was taken in completing this Rural Impact Assessment including the identification of relevant stakeholders?

6.16.1 Members of the Community Transport Association made the point that they should have been included as a key stakeholder for the consultation as they represent the rural transport operators across all areas. Similarly, the Northern Ireland Rural Women’s Network argued that it should have been identified because of its representation of rural women. The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association queried whether disabled rural transport users were involved in the consultation process.

The Department’s Response

6.16.2 In order to try to capture issues of concern to people living in rural areas and assist in the preparation of the Rural Impact Assessment, the Department consulted the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Rural Development Council and the Rural Community Network in the run-up to this consultation. The impact assessment included the issues raised as a result of these discussions.

6.16.3 As local public transport plans are prepared, it will be necessary to carry out further screening as specific proposals begin to emerge and the impacts can be assessed in more detail.

Consultation Question

Do you agree that the Public Transport Reform policy will have a positive impact on rural communities? If not, and you wish to give reasons for your view, please state why.

6.16.4 Most responses on this issue agreed that there was potential for a positive impact. However, some responses highlighted the distinction between people living in rural areas generally and those living in rurally more isolated areas without main roads, who were perceived as being less likely to benefit due to a lack of access to public transport.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

The Department's Response

6.16.5 The Department believes that the Public Transport Reform policy will have a long term beneficial effect and will benefit rural communities. The proposals provide for a mix of contracts, permits and grant aid for rural services. In addition, the requirement to develop and consult on local public transport plans will provide a more explicit approach to identifying and meeting local transport needs. The agency's ability to meet all of those needs will be dependent on the funding available to it. There should, however, also be opportunities for better linkages between different public transport services. In addition, there should be scope for more innovative and more cost effective approaches to meeting local needs.

Consultation Question

Do you consider that we have identified all of the issues arising from this policy that may have an impact on rural communities? If not, please confirm what other areas you feel should have been included.

6.16.6 A minority of responses identified issues that they felt should have been included. There were calls for greater inter-departmental co-operation, for example in terms of access to essential services such as travel to and from hospitals, which may involve particularly long journeys for rural dwellers. The point was made that there was a need for the proposals to be joined up with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and with Local Health Trusts as their vehicles and funding could potentially be used to improve services overall. A similar case was made in respect of the Department of Education's school transport vehicles.

6.16.7 The issue of vehicle accessibility for older passengers and people with disabilities was raised, as was the need for wider availability of concessionary travel on public transport services in rural areas.

The Department's Response

6.16.8 The Department believes the introduction of local public transport plans should lead to a more integrated approach to public transport service provision. The agency will work with other government departments in order to secure a more joined up approach to publicly funded transport services.

6.16.9 All transport providers who secure contracts to provide services on routes, whether urban or rural, will be obligated to conform to the required standards of vehicle accessibility.

Consultation Question

Do you agree with our analysis of the issues and evidence of the rural impacts arising from the Public Transport Reform policy? If not, please outline anything which you feel we should cover.

6.16.10 Concerns were raised with the validity of the statistics used for the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland for 2005-2007, with the Rural Community Network suggesting that the survey used was relatively small. Particular reference was made to the statistic for travel time to walk to the nearest bus stop, which some responses indicated failed to take into consideration key issues such as the age and mobility of some individuals, the difficulties faced by people with disabilities, accessibility, bus frequency and the lack of footpaths and lighting.

Consultation Question

Is there any other evidence which you consider we should take into account in this assessment of rural impacts?

6.16.11 As with the question above, some responses mentioned the problem that there is a lack of statistical evidence from which to draw information on public transport issues in rural areas. Further concentration on age demographics was called for, as the scenario of rural areas with ageing populations that are increasingly reliant on public transport to access essential services was highlighted as a problem for the future. Additionally, the lack of evidence relating to problems faced by people with disabilities or other mobility issues who live in rural areas was highlighted.

The Department's Response

6.16.12 The Department agrees that there is a lack of detailed data from which to draw evidence of rural travel patterns. The Travel Survey was the most relevant data set available, and unfortunately there were limits in terms of how far information could be broken down into individual categories, particularly in relation to issues such as disability.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.16.13 This issue becomes more relevant as we move to the next stage of the reform programme particularly as proposals for local public transport plans are developed. In preparation for the development of local public transport plans, the Department will review the statistical evidence available and seek to obtain relevant data from other Government Departments, partner organisations and other relevant sources.

6.17 Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment

6.17.1 Consultees were given the opportunity to provide comment on the Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment with feedback particularly welcome on the following issues:

- The approach that was taken in completing the Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment;
- Groups or sectors that could be impacted upon by the reform proposals;
- Potential compliance costs for operators;
- Assessment of the benefits identified; and
- Stakeholder involvement.

6.17.2 Of the 103 written responses received to the consultation exercise, 23 made specific reference to various aspects of the Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment. The key points raised are discussed below.

Compliance Costs

6.17.3 A number of responses referred to the additional costs for all operators that would be associated with the implementation of an integrated ticketing system and ensuring that vehicles meet accessibility requirements.

The Department's Response

6.17.4 Integrated ticketing is considered in detail in Section 6.11. The Department does not consider that small operators should be required to use such a system and the complexities involved may make it difficult to justify including all operators. As part of a wider review of the technology required for public transport in the future, the Department plans to undertake a study into the need for and feasibility of integrated ticketing. This study will help identify the range of costs associated with the implementation of integrated ticketing systems.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.17.5 Any operator who is applying for a contract or a permit under the new arrangements will be required to meet the contract / permit specification which will include meeting the statutory accessibility requirements. The requirement for transport operators to ensure that their vehicles are fully accessible is underpinned by the Department's Accessible Transport Strategy. The vision of the Accessible Transport Strategy is to "ensure that we have an accessible transport system that enables older people and people with disabilities to participate more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life." Full details on the Accessible Transport Strategy can be found at www.drdni.gov.uk/index/accessible_transport.htm.

Competition Assessment

6.17.6 One response commented on the competition assessment conducted as part of the Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment and in particular the Department's assertion that "the public transport market here would not hold significant attraction for major international groups, unless they were offered the opportunity to pursue substantial packages of work within Belfast". The response concluded that this was an unfair statement without operators having the opportunity to investigate the market and establish a business case.

The Department's Response

6.17.7 The Outline Business Case, which was completed to inform the Public Transport Reform proposals, considered the potential for the introduction of competition including the potential impacts on operators, consumers and the market as a whole. It concluded that the public transport market here would not hold significant attraction for major international groups, unless they were offered the opportunity to pursue substantial packages of work within Belfast. The Outline Business Case suggested that in the future any competition for Translink is more likely to come from smaller operators, probably mainly from the local marketplace.

6.17.8 The Minister has ruled out privatisation of the public transport system and it is envisaged, therefore, that Translink will remain the lead provider of public transport services. Within the context of a planned and regulated network, it is proposed that there will continue to be opportunities for private operators to apply for permits for innovative services and to compete for contracts where appropriate.

Cost of Agency

6.17.9 One response referred to the extra cost incurred with the agency model and questioned whether this represented value for money.

The Department's Response

6.17.10 This issue is addressed in Section 6.4. It is also worth noting that as part of the Outline Business case, completed to inform the reform proposals, the agency option was identified as the organisational model that had the potential to generate the most efficiencies in terms of organisational structure and operational performance over a five year period. Further work will be required during the next phase of the reforms by the Department and NITHC / Translink to determine how these savings can be achieved.

Equality

6.17.11 A number of responses to the consultation commented on the importance of future arrangements for the delivery of transport services to the section 75 groups, particularly in relation to age and disability.

The Department's Response

6.17.12 The Department's response to these issues is considered under the response to the Equality Impact Assessment at section 6.18 of this document.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

6.18 Draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

6.18.1 Of the 103 written responses received as part of the public consultation exercise, 16 responses contained specific comments on the draft EQIA. The key points raised are discussed below.

Balance of the Draft EQIA between considering the impact on staff in Translink and the impacts on the wider community and public transport users.

6.18.2 Seven of the responses said that the balance in the draft EQIA was too heavily weighted towards an analysis of the impact of the proposed organisational changes on Translink staff and that more consideration needed to be given to the wider impact on the passengers and the community in general.

The Department's Response

6.18.3 The Department accepts that the draft EQIA contains more detailed analysis on the potential for impact on staff in NITHC/Translink who may be affected by the proposals for organisational change but this is a direct reflection of the current stage of policy development in relation to the reform programme. The proposals for new organisational and governance structures do not have a direct impact on the public at this stage but the establishment of an agency with specific responsibility for public transport, aims to increase the focus on delivery of an improved and integrated transport system with increased participation of customer and public representation through involvement and consultation in the development of local public transport plans. The proposed agency, which will remain part of the Department, will continue to be subject to all requirements of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. As such, any proposals by the agency to develop or introduce new public transport policies which have a more direct impact on the wider community will be subject to further screening for equality impacts and, if required it is at this stage that more detailed equality impact assessments on passengers and the wider community will be carried out to assess the equality impact of any specific proposals. In addition, the Department will continue section 75 monitoring of all programmes and impact assessments and through this review and monitoring will identify if performance is not as good as anticipated and any reasons for this.

- 6.18.4 The analysis of impact on the wider community contained in this draft EQIA which considered evidence from previous equality impact assessments in the field of public transport, coupled with the responses received during the consultation period has highlighted the importance of public transport to many of the section 75 groups. The Department will be keen to consult with and encourage further involvement of representative groups during the development of the next stage of the reform programme, particularly in relation to proposals for the introduction of local public transport plans. These will be an important tool for the agency in ensuring that public transport needs and impacts are fully considered, particularly in relation to impacts on women, young people, older people, people with disabilities, those with dependants, disadvantaged individuals, groups and areas.
- 6.18.5 In preparation for the next stage of the reform programme the Department will also be considering the availability of public transport qualitative and quantitative data particularly in relation to rural/disabled/older and socially excluded parts of society.

Gender profile of Translink Staff

- 6.18.6 Three responses highlighted the gender profile for Translink as an organisation and there was a request for a further breakdown in grades in NITHC/Translink and NICS.

The Department's Response

- 6.18.7 While the draft EQIA clearly demonstrates the gender imbalance within NITHC/Translink this is heavily influenced by the nature of the organisation. The biggest category of employees is bus drivers and traditionally this has been a male dominated occupation. While the Department is not directly responsible for equality issues within NITHC/Translink, the new agency will continue to work with Translink in relation to best practice and adherence to equality legislation. NITHC/Translink has over the past number of years been proactive in dealing with the issue of gender imbalance and further details of this can be found in the organisation's report "Recruitment Policy EQIA" produced in July 2008 and available on the Translink Website.

6.0 Analysis of Responses to Consultation Questions and Departmental Response

- 6.18.8 Further information on the gender profile by grade has been provided in the Final EQIA report at section 5.14.
- 6.18.9 The Department would also take this opportunity to thank the Training for Women Network for providing a Gender-proofing checklist with their consultation response. The Department will share this information with NITHC/Translink.

Consideration of impacts in relation to older people and disabled people

- 6.18.10 Three of the responses raised particular issues about the assumption in the draft EQIA that the reform proposals would have a potential positive effect on disabled and older people.

The Department's Response

- 6.18.11 The Department recognises the importance of public transport in relation to disabled and older people. The proposed new agency will remain within the Department for Regional Development and will continue to be fully committed to the implementation of both the Regional Transportation Strategy and all aspects of the Accessible Transport Strategy and compliance with disability duties. The Department is also keen to engage directly with representative organisations for both older and disabled people (and other section 75 representative organisations) during the design and implementation stage of the reform programme and will be contacting the organisations directly to take this forward. In addition, any proposals by the agency to develop or introduce new public transport policies which have a more direct impact on the wider community, will be subjected to further screening for equality impacts and, if required, it is at this stage that more detailed equality impact assessments on the wider community will be carried out to assess the impact of any specific proposals.

- 6.18.12 The Department will be issuing a final EQIA report to reflect the issues and responses above.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The main purpose of the proposed public transport reforms is to put in place the arrangements which will create an effective, efficient and sustainable public transport system that contributes to the Executive's transportation, environmental, social inclusion and equality objectives. This will be achieved by introducing new service delivery arrangements that will enable the Department to contract with public transport operators, while ensuring compliance with EC regulation 1370/2007 and introducing other associated regulatory and organisational reforms.
- 7.2 The public consultation exercise and continued engagement with key stakeholders in the transport, community and business sectors has served to underpin and significantly inform the reform proposals.
- 7.3 As a result, the Department will be recommending to the Northern Ireland Executive that a new public transport agency, within the Department for Regional Development, should be established with responsibility for the procurement of public transport services and associated regulatory arrangements. The Department will continue to consult widely and to work with key stakeholders to ensure that the implementation arrangements will deliver the policy intentions.
- 7.4 Legislative provisions to support the new arrangements will be sought. A proposed Public Transport Bill to be taken through the Northern Ireland Assembly will provide for the following:
- power for the Department to award contracts for the provision of public transport services, which will allow the Department to comply with EU Regulation 1370/07 and to award contracts directly to NITHC/Translink as the internal operator or through competition;
 - the creation of a public transport service permit system to facilitate the identification and provision of services which fall outside the contracted network;
 - changes to the current "Road Service Licensing" system to allow for the separation of operator licensing and the regulation of bus services/routes;
 - creation of offences in relation to the contracting and permit regimes and the enforcement powers and powers of entry required to ensure safety and standards on the public transport network are maintained;
 - power to allow the Department to designate bus stations and depots as "shared facilities" and to specify the access conditions;
 - power to regulate the conduct of passengers in bus premises;

7.0 Conclusions

- changes to the statutory role of the Consumer Council to reflect the revised arrangements, including the establishment of arrangements for co-operation with the Department on public transport matters;
- power to allow the Department to establish, regulate and maintain integrated ticketing systems;
- power for the Department to purchase and install on-street machines for the vending of public transport tickets and creation of offences relating to interference with these machines;
- powers to allow the Department to acquire and dispose of land, property and vehicles for public transport purposes; and
- powers in relation to the payment of grants to transport advisory bodies and for the provision of public transport services for older people, people with disabilities and those in rural areas.

7.5 In addition and as a result of this consultation, the Department will consider placing on the agency a statutory duty to consult on local public transport plans. This approach was influenced by a widespread demand at the public meetings and in the written responses from Councils, organisations representing rural and section 75 groupings and from stakeholders generally, for meaningful consultation and involvement in the production of the proposed local public transport plans.

7.6 The Department wishes to thank all of those who have been involved in the development of these important reform proposals and in particular would wish to acknowledge the helpful and constructive manner in which consultees engaged with the Department during the public consultation period.

Annexes

ANNEX A: Consultation Dates and Venues

Location	Venue	Date	Time
1. Derry/ Londonderry	City Hotel	Wed 2 Dec 2009	14:00 – 16:30
2. Cookstown	Glenavon House Hotel	Thu 3 Dec 2009	18:30 – 21:00
3. Portadown	Seagoe Hotel	Fri 4 Dec 2009	10:00 – 12:30
4. Bangor	Marine Court Hotel	Tue 8 Dec 2009	14:00 – 16:30
5. Downpatrick	Down Arts Centre	Thu 10 Dec 2009	18:30 – 21:00
6. Belfast	Holiday Inn	Tue 12 Jan 2010	10:00 – 12:30
7. Newry	Newry Arts Centre	Wed 13 Jan 2010	18:30 – 21:00
8. Omagh	Silverbirch Hotel	Thu 14 Jan 2010	10:00 – 12:30
9. Ballymena	B'mena Showgrounds	Tue 19 Jan 2010	10:00 – 12:30
10. Enniskillen	The Clinton Centre	Wed 20 Jan 2010	18:30 – 21:00
11. Coleraine	The Lodge Hotel	Thu 21 Jan 2010	18:30 – 21:00

ANNEX B: Sectoral Profile of Attendees at Public Meetings

Meeting Venue / Sector	Derry/ Londonderry	Cookstown	Portadown	Bangor	Downpatrick	Belfast	Newry	Omagh	Ballymena	Enniskillen	Coleraine
Members of the Public	2	1	1	11		9	3		5	3	10
Local Government Reps		2	1	4	1	1	1	2	5	5	
NITHC / Translink	2	2	2	5	2	5	5	3	2	2	4
Commercial Operator Reps	7	2	2		2	3	4		2	1	
Community Transport Reps			2		1	3	1	2	3	1	
Vol. / Comm. / Disability Orgs			2	6		7			2	3	8
Consumer Groups		1	1								
Trade Union Reps				1		1	1				
Government Departments / NDPBs				2		1			1		
Educational Establishments	1										
Advisory Organisations	1			1			1				
Pressure Groups	1					3					
District Policing Partnership Reps				1							
Rural Development Organisations		1					2		1		
Transport Consultants					1						
Business / Independent Organisations						2					1
Health & Social Care Trusts							1				
Local Press				2							
Total Number of Attendees	14	9	11	33	7	35	19	7	21	15	23

ANNEX C: Departmental Representation at Meetings

Name	Position in DRD	Meetings Attended
Doreen Brown	Deputy Secretary, Regional Planning & Transportation Division	4, 7, 8, 10, 11.
Brian White	Director, Ports and Public Transport Division (PPTD)	All meetings.
Sean Johnston	Senior Principal, Public Transport Reform, PPTD	All meetings.
Anne Breen	Principal Officer, Public Transport Reform, PPTD	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
Trevor Robinson	Principal Officer, Transport Policy Branch, PPTD	4.
Michael Deery	Public Transport Reform, PPTD	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
David Strain	Public Transport Reform, PPTD	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11.
Kyle Crutchley	Public Transport Reform, PPTD	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11.
Astrid Stuart	Public Transport Reform, PPTD	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11.
Roger Walker	Public Transport Reform, PPTD	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11.
Rhonda O'Neill	Public Transport Reform, PPTD	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10.

ANNEX D: Summary of Public Meeting Evaluation Responses

	Derry / Londonderry	Cookstown	Portadown	Bangor	Downpatrick	Belfast	Newry	Omagh	Ballymena	Enniskillen	Coleraine	Total	% Total
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Returns	14	1	10	18	6	23	16	6	18	11	14	137	
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1. How informative did you feel the Presentation was?													
Very Informative	5	1	3	8	1	4	8	5	13	7	8	63	45.7%
Informative	7	0	7	10	5	18	7	1	5	4	6	70	50.7%
Not Informative	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	5	3.6%

2. Did you feel that the Question and Answer Session gave you an adequate opportunity to clarify any issues you had?													
Yes	10	1	8	16	6	16	10	6	17	11	11	112	81.2%
To some extent	3	0	0	1	0	3	2	0	1	0	2	12	8.7%
No	0	0	1	1	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	9	6.5%
No clarification needed	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	5	3.6%

3. Did you feel the Workshop Discussion gave you an adequate opportunity to express your views?													
Yes	12	1	8	13	6	18	15	6	18	11	13	121	89.6%
To some extent	2	0	2	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	13	9.6%
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.8%

4. How would you rate the following elements of the event?													
a) Location of venue													
Good	12	1	10	15	5	18	13	6	14	10	13	117	84.2%
Fair	2	0	0	3	1	7	3	0	3	1	1	21	15.1%
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.7%

	Derry / Londonderry	Cookstown	Portadown	Bangor	Downpatrick	Belfast	Newry	Omagh	Ballymena	Enniskillen	Coleraine	Total	% Total
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Returns	14	1	10	18	6	23	16	6	18	11	14	137	
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b) Comfort of venue

Good	13	1	10	14	2	7	12	6	15	11	14	105	76.6%
Fair	1	0	0	4	4	10	4	0	3	0	0	26	19%
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	4.4%

c) Supplementary materials (Agenda, Workshop Discussion Paper, Flip-charts)

Good	13	1	10	14	6	18	15	6	17	9	14	123	90.4%
Fair	1	0	0	4	0	3	1	0	1	2	0	12	8.9%
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.7%

5. How did you hear about this public meeting?

Public Notice	3	0	1	2	0	3	2	2	5	5	1	24	14.4%
Press Article	4	1	2	8	0	1	4	0	2	1	1	24	14.4%
Consultation Pack	3	0	1	0	1	4	4	1	2	3	1	20	11.9%
Website	0	0	1	3	1	6	3	1	6	0	3	24	14.4%
Telephone Call	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	2.4%
Letter from DRD	3	0	3	0	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	20	11.9%
Flyer	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	2	3	11	6.6%
Word of Mouth	1	0	1	1	0	3	2	0	1	1	2	12	7.2%
Other	3	0	4	1	1	4	3	1	5	5	1	28	16.8%

NB: In some of the questions, the total responses add up to more or less than 137 (the total number of Evaluation Forms received). This is because in some instances, more than one response was given or only some questions were answered.

ANNEX E: Stakeholder Meetings During Consultation Period

Name of Organisation	Date of Meeting
PlayBoard	16 November 2009
Regional Transportation Strategy Steering Group (RTSSG)	26 November 2009
Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)	17 December 2009
Confederation of British Industry (CBI)	12 January 2010
Institute of Directors (IoD)	22 January 2010
NI Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC ICTU)	22 January 2010
Federation of Passenger Transport (FPT)	28 January 2010
Community Transport Association (CTA)	2 February 2010
Translink Youth Forum / Northern Ireland Youth Forum	20 February 2010

ANNEX F: List of Written Respondents

Response Number	Name	Organisation (where applicable)
1	Michael Mayock	
2	Glyn Roberts	Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association
3	J.M. Robinson	
4	McConnell Auld	
5	Alan Hall	
6	Amanda Martin	Ards Borough Council
7	Michael Mulholland	GMB Trade Union
8	G. Max O'Brien	
9		An Ceathrú Póilí
10	Máirín Ní Dhuibhir	
11	Janet Muller	POBAL
12	Cormac Ó Donnghaile	An Cheathrú Ghaeltachta Teo
13	Niall Ó Catháin	
14	Leonne Ní Loinsigh	
15	Gearóid Trimble	
16	Dai Powell	DPTAC
17	Orliath	
18	Jade	
19	Eimear Mullan	
20	Damien McConomy	
21	Éamonn Ó Faogáin	
22	Karen Wallace	Northern Corridor Railways Group
23	Daniel McSorley	Omagh District Council
24	John Cunningham	
25	Brian Groves	Newry and Mourne Community Transport
26	Allan Elder	
27	Emma Patterson	Older People's Advocate
28	Donncha Mac Niallais	Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin
29	Richard Hunter	Institute of Directors
30	Andrew McKeever	
31	Keith Halstead	Community Transport Association (UK)
32	Ursula Mhic An tSaoir	Aonad na Gaeilge de chuid Chomhairle an Lúir agus Mhúrn
33	Yvonne Green	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
34	Deirdre Ní Chinnéide	
35	Duailtín Ní Mhianáin	
36	Patricia Irvine	Women's Forum Northern Ireland
37	Joseph Mullin	
38	Michael Lorimer	Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (Imtac)
39	Tina McMillan	Lagan Valley Rural Transport
40	Kim Smyth	Antrim Borough Council
41	Rosaleen McCorley	
42	Claire Higgins	Institute of Public Health in Ireland
43	Cairméail Uí Eoghain	
44	Estelle Nig Aoidh	

45	Siubhán Mhic Giolla Eoin	
46	Mícheál Ó'Domhnaill	
47	Peter Bunting	Northern Ireland Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
48	Laurence Bindley	
49	John Mooney	Training for Women Network
50	Frank Bunting	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
51	Louise Coyle	Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network
52	Brenda Ní Ghairbhí	Conradh na Gaeilge
53	Ryan Simpson	Consumer Council
54	Pádraig agus Colette Ó Mianáin	
55	Dermot O'Hara	
56	Fiona O'Connell	Women's Support Network
57	Tiziana O'Hara	Women's Centres Regional Partnership
58	Julienné Elliott	Coleraine Town Partnership
59	Ciarán Rogan	NITHC/Translink
60	Alex Hall	Office of Fair Trading
61	Rebecca Hosseini	Ballymena Borough Council
62	James Dillon	Sustainable Development Commission
63	Alastair Adair	University of Ulster
64	Brigid Scullion	Cookstown Rural Community Partnership
65	Karen Magill	Federation of Passenger Transport
66	Julie Jordan	Armagh Rural Transport
67	Karen Moore	Direct Links Transport
68	Zoe Anderson	Access to Benefits (A2B)
69	Ian Wilson	DART Partnership
70	Shirley McCay	Belfast City Council
71	Martin McColgan	Sinn Fein Councillor Group
72	Mark Allen	Rural Community Network
73	Billy Moore	Roe Valley Rural Transport
74	Mary O'Neill	Dungannon & District Community Transport
75	Bronagh O'Kane	West Belfast Partnership
76	Elaine Colgan	
77	Anita Flanagan	Rural Lift
78	Leslie Ferron	
79	Sue Christie	Northern Ireland Environment Link
80	Andrew Murdock	Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
81	Kellie Armstrong	Community Transport Association (NI)
82	Nigel Smyth	Confederation of British Industry
83	Allen Parker	First Northern Ireland Ltd.
84	Diane Coyle	Rural Link
85	Seán Ó'Coinn	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
86	Seán agus Ríonach Ó Daimhín	
87	Sharon Drumm	FAST Rural Transport
88	Patrick Casement	Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

89	Francis Lenny	Just Mobility
90	Alex Maskey MLA	Sinn Féin
91	Alan Burke	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
92	Ian Sinclair	
93	Martin Patterson	Newry and Mourne District Council
94	Stephen Long	West Belfast Taxi Association
95	Paddy Mackel	NIPSA
96	Steve Chambers	Invest NI
97	Paula Martin	Bridge Accessible Transport
98	Fiona Chan	Alliance Party
99	Wilfred Mitchell	Federation of Small Businesses
100	Karen Smyth	NILGA
101	Alan Clements	Newtownabbey Borough Council
102	John Briggs	Armagh City and District Council
103	Geoffrey Perrin	Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation

ANNEX G: Sectoral Profile of Written Responses to Public Consultation

Sector	Number of Responses
Members of the Public	32
Community Transport Operators / Reps	14
Local Government Reps	12
Voluntary / Community / Disability Organisations	9
Irish Language Reps	7
Women's Organisations	5
Government Departments / NDPBs	5
Business / Independent Organisations	5
Transport Operators / Reps	4
Trade Union Reps	4
Political Parties	2
Consumer Groups	2
Educational Establishments	1
Health Organisations	1
Total Number of Responses	103

ANNEX H: Consultation Responses by Topic

	Consultation Questions	Response Number
Q1.	Performance-based contracts and permits.	4, 7, 12, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 31, 36, 38, 39, 41, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 94, 95, 97, 98, 103
Q2.	Continuation of regulated public transport system.	4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 22, 25, 26, 36, 39, 41, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50, 53, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 72, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 91, 92, 94, 95, 97, 98, 103
Q3.	Regulation of fares and fare structure.	2, 4, 7, 11, 12, 22, 25, 26, 27, 36, 39, 41, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99
Q4.	Role of agency in specifying requirements, awarding contracts and monitoring/reporting on performance.	1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 36, 38, 39, 41, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 87, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 101, 103
Q5.	Translink remaining lead supplier.	2, 4, 7, 12, 22, 25, 26, 36, 39, 41, 46, 47, 48, 50, 53, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 92, 94, 95, 97, 99, 101
Q6.	Proposed offences and fine levels.	4, 7, 12, 22, 25, 26, 36, 39, 47, 48, 50, 53, 58, 59, 61, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 76, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 94, 95, 97, 98
Q7.	Views on development of local public transport plans.	2, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 31, 33, 36, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 94, 95, 97, 98, 100, 102
Q8.	Agency power to designate passenger facilities as shared and to specify access arrangements.	4, 7, 8, 12, 22, 25, 26, 36, 39, 46, 47, 48, 50, 53, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 94, 95, 97
Q9.	Future role of Consumer Council.	2, 4, 7, 12, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 36, 39, 41, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 92, 94, 95, 97
Q10.	Future arrangements for provision of rail services.	2, 3, 4, 7, 12, 22, 25, 26, 30, 36, 39, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 94, 95, 100, 101, 102
Q11.	Need for integrated and off-vehicle ticketing.	4, 7, 12, 22, 23, 25, 26, 33, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 94, 95, 97, 98, 100, 101, 102
Q12.	Agency role as statutory consultee in land use planning and developer contributions.	2, 4, 7, 12, 22, 23, 25, 26, 36, 39, 41, 42, 46, 47, 48, 50, 53, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 91, 94, 95, 96, 97, 99, 103

Q13.	Formalisation of arrangements to fund transport advisory bodies.	4, 7, 12, 22, 23, 25, 26, 31, 36, 39, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 87, 94, 95, 97
Q14.	Provision of services and information in other languages.	2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 28, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, 87, 90, 94, 95, 97, 98

Impact Assessments	Response Number
EQIA.	4, 8, 11, 25, 38, 46, 48, 49, 56, 57, 67, 69, 72, 80, 81, 94
Integrated Impact Assessment (Rural).	4, 7, 8, 12, 25, 26, 36, 39, 41, 42, 46, 47, 48, 51, 58, 62, 63, 64, 67, 69, 72, 73, 74, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 84, 87, 94
Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment.	4, 7, 8, 12, 25, 26, 36, 39, 46, 47, 48, 58, 62, 67, 69, 72, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 94

Other Issues		Response Number
1.	Rail link to Airport	3, 100, 101, 102
2.	Public Consultation Process	5, 29, 38, 64, 66, 73, 74, 80, 81, 84, 87, 89
3.	Location of Agency Headquarters	8
4.	Disability Awareness / Access Issues	8, 23, 25, 27, 38, 51, 68, 80, 89, 93
5.	Job Losses	47
6.	Role of NITHC	65
7.	Future of Ulsterbus Tours	65
8.	West Belfast Taxis	75
9.	Cross-border co-operation	8, 80
10.	Audio-visual on buses	80

USEFUL WEBSITES

Department for Regional Development
www.drdni.gov.uk

Official Government Website
www.nidirect.gov.uk

Translink
www.translink.co.uk

Door-2-Door Transport
www.door2door-ni.info

Community Transport
www.communitytransport-ni.com

Concessionary Travel
www.drdni.gov.uk/index/public_transport/publictrans-concessionary_fares.htm

Rapid Transit
www.drdni.gov.uk/index/rapid-transit.htm

Park & Ride Services
www.translink.co.uk/ParkAndRidePage1.asp

Travelwise
www.travelwiseni.gov.uk

Federation of Passenger Transport
www.fptni.org

The Consumer Council
www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee
www.imtac.org.uk

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