

PUBLIC TRANSPORT REFORM – PROCESS TO DATE

- In 2002, a DRD public consultation paper titled a *New Start for Public Transport in Northern Ireland* outlined a broad framework for reform.
- In 2006, the government announced proposals for reform. These included a three tier structure comprising: a top government tier responsible for broad policy, legislation and regulations; a middle tier responsible for designing and managing services and securing their provision; and a third tier comprising transport operators.
- The primary reasons for reform include the need for: a regulated, integrated public transport service; clear roles and responsibilities for providers; a clear split between designers and operators; improved revenue and funding arrangements; and compliance with new EU regulations.
- There is general support in the industry for the adoption of a three tier structure.
- In 2006 it was proposed that the middle tier would comprise new local authorities acting together in the form of a Passenger Transport Authority. Given that the RPA concluded that roads functions would remain with DRD, this proposal has been reconsidered.
- A strategic business case outlining and evaluating 5 structural options for reform, focusing on the middle tier, has been developed by DRD.
- The options considered were 1) Do nothing; 2) Revise Translink model; 3) create a Passenger Transport Authority; 4) create an Executive Agency; and 5) create an Non Departmental Public Body.
- The strategic business case proposes that the: 1) Do Nothing; 2) Revised Translink; and 4) Executive Agency models be brought forward for further evaluation. At this stage, the Agency model is the preferred choice of the Minister.
- In August 2008, the Department appointed consultants to carry out this detailed evaluation in the form of an Outline Business Case. A final report is expected December 2008. Widespread public consultation is expected to follow between April and July 2009.
- The Department has costed the possibility of evaluating another option should it be required. To keep with the proposed time frame, this option would need to be with the consultants by the end of September 2008.

- Currently the Department is undertaking a range of policy papers on a number of work streams. These include the role of the Consumer Council and Local Authorities; fares regulation; licensing; governance; contracting regimes; and legislation. The process of reform requires that many complicated issues be addressed.
- It is hoped that final proposals will be ready for executive approval by the end of October 2009 enabling the legislative process to take place between November 2009 and April 2010.

August 2008