Introduction

Public transport is part of a shared mobility strategy that touches the lives of everyone in Northern Ireland, not just those that use our services. It is clearly crucial for our region’s future to develop and grow.

Translink is Northern Ireland’s main public transport provider. We are a public corporation which has a degree of commercial independence, yet are governed in policy terms by the Department for Infrastructure. We provide an essential public service to the people of Northern Ireland which impacts on everyone, supporting economic growth, social inclusion and the welfare of the local communities we serve. This supports the growth and prosperity of Northern Ireland.

Providing high quality public transport not only enables a region to thrive, it also helps to address the challenge of congestion and air quality, creating healthier towns and cities. On an individual level it gives people choices, freedom and more opportunities in terms of business, education, shopping, travel, tourism and leisure pursuits.

This 5 year Strategy entitled ‘Get on Board’ sets out a Vision for Translink:

"To be Your First Choice for Travel in Northern Ireland."

Our mission is to work innovatively and efficiently taking a collaborative approach with all relevant stakeholders to deliver a transformation in public transport, providing integrated services which connect people, enhance the economy and improve the environment, enabling a thriving Northern Ireland.

At Translink, we are passionate about providing excellent public transport and this is endorsed by our guiding Values: Safety, People, Innovation, Responsibility, Integrity and Teamwork - this is the Translink ‘SPIRIT’.

Our Strategy sets out how we will deliver results across four key objectives:

• To deliver excellent bus and rail service performance.
• To deliver outstanding customer satisfaction at every touch point.
• To grow the number of passengers using public transport.
• To deliver value for money.

We want the people of Northern Ireland to be proud of their local public transport services and look forward to having your support to help us deliver our Vision.

‘Get on Board’

Frank Hewitt
Chairman

Chris Conway
Group Chief Executive
Our Vision
“To be Your First Choice for Travel in Northern Ireland.”

Our Mission
“To deliver a transformation in public transport, providing integrated services which connect people, enhance the economy and improve the environment, enabling a thriving Northern Ireland.”

Translink’s Strategy Wheel

Our Values
The ‘Translink SPIRIT’ is a set of guiding principles that are a fundamental part of everything we do. These core values are embedded in the culture of our organisation and enable us to lead, inspire and succeed in delivering our goals for Translink.

- **Safety**
  We put safety first by taking care of the people around us.

- **People**
  Our people make the difference in the service customers receive. We will respect one another and seek a committed, talented and diverse workforce.

- **Innovation**
  We seek out new ideas and creative solutions to business challenges and are agile and responsive to the changing needs of our stakeholders.

- **Responsibility**
  We are responsible for our actions. We are good neighbours and corporate citizens in the communities where we operate.

- **Integrity**
  We do the right thing. Our actions are fair, ethical, trustworthy and straightforward.

- **Teamwork**
  We work together to deliver the best results. We encourage collaboration to build and nurture valuable partnerships.
The importance of Public Transport

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

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

The draft Programme for Government has identified 14 strategic outcomes which set out the ambition for Northern Ireland society. Providing a high quality public transport system impacts on many of the PfG outcomes and directly links to the Outcome: ‘We connect people and places’. One of the key indicators for this outcome is to ‘Increase the importance of Public Transport
relationship between key indicators for this outcome is to ‘Increase the use of public transport and active travel’, which links directly to this strategy. Some of the other outcomes in the PfG which link to this strategy are:

- We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment;
- We enjoy long, healthy, active lives;
- We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other;
- We have high quality public services;
- We have created a place where people want to live, learn, work, visit and invest.

Tackling Congestion

Research shows that in cities with a high percentage of shared mobility (public transport, walking and cycling), the cost of transport for the community can be as much as 50% lower than cities where private car ownership dominates. Rail makes the most efficient use of the space available. By providing high capacity, frequent services at peak hours to and from urban hubs, along strategic corridors, it plays a vital role in helping to reduce congestion, particularly in and out of Belfast.

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

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

Supporting Retailers

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

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

Supporting the Visitor Economy

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

Enhancing local communities and supporting social inclusion

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

36% of households in Belfast do not have access to a car.

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

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

Council Areas Community Planning

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

Connecting to Education

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

Links to Health Care

Translink has worked closely with the Health and Social Care Trusts to provide a range of transport options to hospitals and health centres across NI for day appointments and visiting.

Protecting the environment and improving local air quality and health

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

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

Active Travel and Health

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

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

The Belfast Bike Scheme already offers excellent sustainable links from public transport hubs offering greener and active travel options for citizens and visitors to get around the city.
OBJECTIVE 1
To deliver excellent bus and rail service performance.

At Translink we recognise that to achieve our Vision and deliver on our Mission we must offer an integrated service across our bus, coach and rail services that exceeds customer expectations on punctuality and reliability.

Safety
The safety and wellbeing of our customers, employees and the general public remains central to Translink’s operations. A significant work programme is in place to deliver, enhance and maintain safe systems, a positive safety culture, emergency preparedness and high profile public safety campaigns in support of this commitment.

As a large and complex organisation with responsibility for the safe transport of people as they go about their everyday lives, we do not leave safety to chance. Our Safety Management System guides our organisation in everything that we do and we strive to engage each and every one of our employees to live by the key principles of behavioural safety.

Our safety management system aims to have zero staff or passenger safety incidents.

Maintaining High Punctuality and Reliability Standards
We deliver 12,500 services every day, operating a fleet of around 1,400 buses, coaches and trains. These vehicles do 44 million miles per year on average and have become more technically complex over the years. This is a challenging task to deliver 100% consistently, but we recognise the importance of service, punctuality and reliability to our customers and a highly skilled workforce is employed day and night to maintain the vehicles and the network and keep everything moving on the road and rail.

We have set challenging goals to ensure that more than 95% of our services are on time and more than 99.5% of services operate reliably.

These are built into our Passenger’s Charter and independently monitored twice a year. The monitoring panel includes the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland.

Exploiting Technology
We aim for continuous improvement by investing in the development and use of technology, enabling us to efficiently plan and allocate all of our resources in terms of our bus and train fleets and the people who operate our business on a 24/7 basis, to ensure we deliver and integrate our timetabled services every day.

Journey Time and other external factors
To deliver excellent punctuality and reliability we adopt a multi-agency partnership approach to address external factors which can impact on our services such as congestion, traffic accidents, road works and track trespass.

Fleet Strategy
We are continuing to work on bringing forward plans to improve the frequency and capacity on the rail network and have a Rail Network Utilisation Strategy which prioritises our investment needs arising from the Future Rail Investment Strategy.

The Network Utilisation Strategy has been developed to scope potential fleet investment in order to increase passenger capacity on the rail network.

In order to maintain the attractiveness of our services, we aim to have a bus fleet with an average age of eight years. It is important we establish a sustained programme of vehicle replacement and retire older vehicles to maintain our high standards of quality, comfort and accessibility for all our passengers.

We need to ensure we are operating with the most environmentally friendly and fuel efficient vehicles across our fleet and will continue to invest in low emissions technologies in our future fleet procurement.

Network Resilience
Our trains operate over 300 miles of track including many bridges, level crossings and signals and we routinely inspect and efficiently maintain this infrastructure to high technical, operational and safety standards. We will renew assets as they approach the end of their useful life which is measured on a balance of safety, economy, availability, reliability and ongoing maintenance. This ensures we maintain operational efficiency.

We are also developing plans to upgrade the rail infrastructure and improve journey times across the network, with work started on the line between Lisburn and Lurgan.

People
We are proud to be recognised as an Investor in People (IIP) having attained a number of awards throughout the organisation. We will continue to provide excellent learning and development opportunities in order to give employees the opportunity to stretch themselves, to do more and new things.

We are committed to creating a diverse workforce as we recognise the benefits this brings to our organisation. By working together to enhance our business environment, we can create a culture that inspires the best ideas, the best people and best opportunity to thrive.

Operational Excellence Key Goals
- Zero safety incidents
- >95% Service Punctuality
- >99.5% Service Reliability
- Exploit technology for greater integration, operational and planning efficiency
- Continuously invest in our bus and rail fleet
- Invest in low emissions technologies across our fleet
- Enhance network resilience and improve journey times
- Investors in People Gold
OBJECTIVE 2
To deliver outstanding customer satisfaction at every touch point.

The Translink brand means that people should get a high quality, integrated presentation when they use our services and meet with our people.

We want to ensure everyone gets a friendly, helpful and professional service at all times. We know this is an essential lever for improving customer satisfaction and increasing trust, as well as being a predominant factor in brand choice and loyalty.

Customer satisfaction is built into our Passenger’s Charter and independently monitored twice a year. We have set a target to achieve greater than 85% customer satisfaction across all our services.

The key elements that drive customer satisfaction are punctuality, value for money, availability of seating, passenger information, passenger comfort, customer service and cleanliness.

Customer Driven Innovation
Customer information is an important tool for business growth. We want to be at the forefront of I.T. developments in transport. Our priority is continued enhancement towards more accurate, individual and easy to use information about all our services. This adds value and helps to generate journeys and reduce cost of distribution.

We will continue to improve access to timetables and in service information, incorporating real time data across a range of internet accessible devices.

To inspire new developments we have made our data available on the Opendata platform to allow third parties to develop commercial applications, effectively promoting shared mobility services.

We will extend digital departure screens across the public transport network for next scheduled and real time departures including airports and park and ride sites.

Customer Complaints and Compliments
Our customers are very important to us and we welcome their comments and suggestions on how we might improve our services. With over 1.5m people travelling every week, we know there will be times when things go wrong. When they do, we will do our best to put things right. Our Passenger’s Charter sets out our responsibilities and is a statement of our commitment to provide high quality bus and train services in Northern Ireland. We aim to reduce the number of complaints to fewer than 15 per 100,000 journeys.

Ticketing Technologies
Innovative ticketing solutions with a focus on integration, flexibility and convenience play an important role in attracting more people on-board Translink services.

Enhancements such as the acceptance of contactless payment cards on-bus, e-purse payments, ticket vending machines at bus and rail stations and key stops, gated rail stations, online/app ticket purchases and smartcard top-ups plus provision of ticketing for Belfast Rapid Transit are all planned.

Accessible Transport Strategy
We are committed to delivering a modern, sustainable, integrated transport network that meets the needs of our community. Translink services play a vital role in this and over recent years there have been a number of accessibility enhancements. These include new vehicles, station improvements and upgrades to rail halts, better passenger information and employee training. These ensure that people with particular needs can participate more fully in society, reducing social isolation, boosting wellbeing and enabling greater independence and a better quality of life. However, we know there is more to do.

We will be working closely with Government Departments alongside stakeholder and disability groups to deliver the Vision of the new Department for Infrastructure Accessible Transport Strategy 2025 to deliver a transport network in Northern Ireland that is inclusive and accessible to all.

Social Inclusion
Public transport helps to support social inclusion by providing access to employment, shops, education, health and social activities for people from all communities and backgrounds. We aim to make services inclusive for all and work to design our transport network and facilities to bring people together, making use of new technology where appropriate.
OBJECTIVE 3
To grow the number of passengers using public transport.

We are committed to supporting an increase in modal shift towards sustainable transport.

We have developed long-term investment strategies for bus and rail services and will work with all key stakeholders to develop funding plans and policy support to deliver passenger growth.

Successful delivery of these growth plans will contribute significantly to modal shift from private to public transport in Northern Ireland.

A number of exciting investment projects are already underway that will contribute to the transformation of our public transport network.

Belfast Transport Hub
‘Weavers Cross’ has been revealed as the name for the exciting new city neighbourhood surrounding the Belfast Transport Hub.

‘Weavers Cross’ situated in the heart of Belfast is an eight-hectare site linking the modern high capacity transport hub on the site of the existing Europa Buscentre and Great Victoria Street stations, with impressive mixed-use development proposals. As a transport-led regeneration project, it has been identified by the NI Executive as one of seven flagship projects for funding, recognising its strategic importance in supporting the growth of the local economy.

This impressive facility will be a catalyst for the regeneration of this area and ensure we have the right infrastructure in place to encourage modal shift and attract more people to use public transport. It will also act as an important gateway to Belfast as a modern, confident and progressive city and stimulate further economic opportunities for Belfast and Northern Ireland.

It is envisaged, subject to planning consent and appropriate funding, that construction could start as early as 2018.

North West Transport Hub
The North West Transport Hub in Derry-Londonderry is an important gateway to the North-West, regenerating the local area. It will encourage a modal shift from car to public transport and other sustainable modes by providing integrated and convenient services to encourage more active travel for a healthier region.

The plans for this are now well underway and subject to planning consent, construction could start in 2018.

Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT)
Translink continues to work on the delivery of BRT with the Department for Infrastructure. As one of the flagship projects identified by the Northern Ireland Executive, the exciting new initiative will deliver an innovative, high capacity, public transport system in a more connected Belfast. It will help to address the current and future transport needs of the city and support sustainable economic growth and regeneration.

As the first hybrid buses, they will be cleaner and more environmentally friendly. This is a dynamic project for the city and for public transport, and a huge opportunity to attract and encourage even more people to travel using this new mode of modern public transport.

The first routes will connect East Belfast, West Belfast and Titanic Quarter via the city centre and are scheduled to be operational late 2018.

Expanded Park & Ride Programme
Park & Ride facilities continue to grow in popularity. We have opened a new purpose-built bus facility at Ballymartin and recently extended facilities at Ballymoney and Whiteabbey Train Stations. Additional facilities at Ballylumne, Ballyboly, Castledawson and Kilwaughter have also been added.

We have further plans for facilities at a number of train stations including Portadown, Moira and Cullybackey and continue to work with the Department for Infrastructure to explore additional opportunities with road improvement schemes.

Event Travel
The events industry is a key economic driver and working closely with event organisers, Translink will play an important role in their successful delivery, helping to build NI’s reputation as a stand out location for great events.

Rail Service Developments
We will continue to develop plans to enhance rail services across the network.

Major engineering work is complete on the construction of a passing loop and installation of a new signalling and telecoms system on the Coleraine to Derry-Londonderry line. The work secures the line’s future operation, enhances safety and reliability and enables the introduction of an hourly service between Derry-Londonderry and Belfast.

Enterprise Service Developments
All services are now operated with newly refurbished trains following completion of a major £12.2 million upgrade. The enhanced service looks and feels like a modern new train with the emphasis on comfort, service and value. Translink will work in partnership with Irish Rail to make improvements in resilience and journey times and to develop a long-term strategic plan for the cross-border Enterprise service, including bringing forward plans for an hourly service.

Bus and Coach Service Developments
Goldline services offer attractive express coach travel with substantial passenger growth in recent years. The Goldline brand proposition has been enhanced through new high specification fleet and further service enhancements are planned across the Goldline network.

Ulsterbus services will continue to work with other shared mobility service providers in health, education and community transport to deliver rural and town services more cost effectively and create links to the inter-urban Ulsterbus and Goldline networks.

Metro quality bus corridors will continue to work towards improving frequencies, to refresh bus stop infrastructure and information and to further simplify and extend the network.

Airport Services
Gateways to Northern Ireland need to be effectively served with high quality public transport links to attract business, leisure and tourism. Translink’s airport services are growing strongly each year and we aim to further develop and promote these routes.
OBJECTIVE 4
To deliver value for money.

The challenge for Translink is to work with all stakeholders to agree a shared mobility model for Northern Ireland which connects people and offers value for money.

There is global evidence that as cities become more urbanised and aided by technology, we are moving towards a shared mobility model, an integrated transport proposition that uses technology to knit public transport together with other modes - walking, cycling, car sharing, taxis and anything else you can think of.

We have an ambitious vision to transform public transport to become the first choice for travel in a shared mobility model in Northern Ireland, growing passenger numbers through a clear focus on our customers and delivering service excellence through our people. We want to engage with all stakeholders to demonstrate the value of public transport and connect people to other sustainable modes of transport.

Funding
Improved public transport in Northern Ireland will require appropriate levels of public funding. The recent NI Audit Office report on the ‘Effectiveness of Public Transport in NI’ endorsed the need for additional spend on the delivery of public transport for Northern Ireland. Public transport expenditure levels, per head of population, in NI are around 60% of that in England and Wales and 40% of that in Scotland.

We will continue to work with all key stakeholders to develop funding plans and policy support to attract more people to public transport and support modal shift.

There are many models across the world for funding public transport. However, whatever approach is adopted it is clear that passengers respond positively to high quality services. If the objective by all stakeholders is to transform public transport and enhance economic development, then creating a stable environment to invest in services is required.

Cost Efficiency
We will maintain a strong cost and continuous improvement focus towards driving business efficiencies throughout the organisation in order to offer best value for our customers and stakeholders and operate effectively.

We are also active in our efforts to minimise fuel consumption through the purchase of more eco-friendly vehicles and have introduced a range of best practice energy-saving measures such as eco-driving programmes to improve our fuel efficiency. These initiatives support our efforts to manage cost, keep fares as low as possible and improve customer satisfaction on value for money.

Revenue Generation
We aim to generate revenue to reinvest in frontline bus and rail services while keeping fares as low as possible. To achieve this, we will maximise commercial opportunities and look at innovative ways of generating revenue from our bus, rail and station infrastructures to invest in public transport.

Fares Strategy
We will work on an annual basis with key stakeholders to review fares and maintain value for money for our customers.

We also actively promote and encourage customers to get the best value deal to help them save money. We have a range of special promotions and everyday value fares available such as Smartlink and yLink, as well as other multi-journey fares including rail weeklies and monthlies. We will continue to innovate in this area and have introduced mLink and iLink fares which offer customers more choice, convenience and integration.

We will work alongside partners like the Consumer Council Northern Ireland to promote best value.

Congestion
As well as affecting competitiveness and air quality, a congested town and city has both a direct and indirect economic impact.

Translink will work with all key stakeholders to tackle this issue and support the development of a Transport Strategy for our cities and towns.

Cost Effective Rural Services
Public transport enhances rural economic growth in many ways, helping to increase the local customer base for a range of services such as local shops. It helps to sustain rural and small urban areas, supporting local employment and encourages social inclusion by reducing the effects of isolation for the people living in these communities.

Translink will continue to forge joint partnerships with Community Transport Organisations, education and health authorities to find cost effective, integrated travel solutions for the local rural community to access local market towns, health centres and other services.
Recent Achievements 2016–2017

Safety Management
An Integrated Safety Management system across our network to maintain high levels of safety and a positive safety culture.

Employees
Employee Engagement Survey completed with positive results for staff satisfaction, engagement, loyalty, involvement and advocacy.

1.5 Million
Growth of over 1.5m additional fare paying passengers in 2016-2017.

70%
Over 50 Park & Ride sites available with over 8k spaces and an average of over 70% utilisation.

Digital
1.2m visits per month with over 70% on mobile devices. Over 100k followers on social media.

Track
£25.3m Knockmore to Lurgan – Ballast Rehabilitation Project – phase 1 completed successfully.

Fleet
85 new eco buses for Metro, Ulsterbus and Airport Express 300 services maintaining quality, comfort and enhancing capacity.

Enterprise
£12.2m mid-life Enterprise refurbishment completed – passenger growth 7% in last year.

Local Rail Enhancements
£46.4m Derry–Londonderry – Coleraine passing loop and signalling upgrade completed. New hourly service introduced Summer 2017.

Technology
Mobile ticketing now available for Metro, NI Railways, Goldline and P&R services.

Web Sales
More customers buying tickets online with 18% increase p.a.

Bus and Train Week
NI’s first Bus and Train Week a key success, delivering over 140k additional journeys.

35k
Over 35k young people are using our integrated yLink discount card.

Rail
New sandite train to improve autumn/winter rail reliability.

Environmental
Top Platinum Award achieved for NI Environmental benchmarking survey.

Passenger Information
More online options with Google Transit and Opendata launched and creative Metro wayfinding introduced.

Accessibility
All main bus and train facilities are fully accessible. Regular engagement with a range of senior and disability groups on passengers’ needs.

Connecting with Customers
Over 4,500 face-to-face customer satisfaction interviews annually. Also 9 Passenger Groups established and a Translink Youth Forum.

Responsibility
Supported over 30 community-led sponsorships and a range of charity initiatives. Appointed Action Mental Health as our main Charity Partner.

Awards
Success with top accolades achieved at the UK Rail Business Awards and Arts & Business.

Public Transport plays a vital role in the future development and success of a shared mobility model for Northern Ireland. Translink has the Vision, the strategic plan and the track record of success, along with the right people with the right skills and expertise to deliver integrated bus, coach and train services to keep Northern Ireland moving and growing.