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Better on Board Charter Overview

The *Better on Board* Charter is a new initiative designed to drive a modal shift in Derry~Londonderry and across the wider region. The goal is to encourage more people to choose public transport, reducing congestion, improving air quality and creating a more sustainable future for everyone.

Better on Board Charter: Focus on Derry~Londonderry and Belfast

The *Better on Board* Charter has launched with two initial **Chapters** — **Derry~Londonderry** and **Belfast** — where the need for change is most urgent and where the potential for positive impact is greatest.

Both cities are grappling with severe traffic congestion which affects quality of life, mobility and the environment. As population growth and increased car ownership put further strain on these urban areas, the opportunity to shift towards sustainable, public transport solutions is clearer than ever.

Both cities have significant opportunities to improve mobility and reduce the reliance on cars. Investing in sustainable transport solutions will directly benefit communities by reducing congestion, improving air quality, and contributing to a healthier and greener future.

These Chapters of the *Better on Board* Charter mark the first steps in a broader movement aimed at improving the way we move across the region.





Why Now?

- **Population Growth & Increased Car Ownership:** Northern Ireland has seen a 16% increase in the number of licensed vehicles over the past decade, putting greater strain on road space. With cities like Derry~Londonderry becoming more densely populated, traffic congestion is a growing problem.
- **Public Transport Benefits:** More investment in public transport has a tangible impact. Since launching in September 2023, Translink's zero emissions Foyle Metro service has facilitated over 3 million passenger journeys, covering more than 1.3 million emissions-free miles. The service has also saved over 2,000 tonnes of CO2, supporting a greener and healthier region.
- **Grand Central Station & Infrastructure Improvements:** The expansion of key transport hubs like **Belfast Grand Central Station** — now ten times larger than its previous facilities — aims to handle 20 million journeys annually, improving local, cross-border and international travel links. This infrastructure upgrade is central to enhancing connectivity across Northern Ireland and our efforts to achieve modal shift.

The Movement for Change

- The *Better on Board* Charter is a call to action, encouraging stakeholders from all sectors — government, transport companies and the public — to join forces in endorsing and working toward a more sustainable transportation system. Public and private partners are being asked to pledge their support to help increase the use of public transport, reduce car dependency and achieve Northern Ireland's climate goals.
- **Translink's Role:** As a key player in this initiative, Translink has set ambitious goals to become climate positive by 2050. The company already facilitates almost 80 million passenger journeys each year and plays a central role in driving Northern Ireland's transition to a more sustainable transport future. Translink's vision is not only to reduce emissions but to improve the overall quality of life for all residents and visitors.



Principles of the Better on Board Charter

Stakeholders in Derry~Londonderry have committed to supporting the Better on Board Charter by endorsing the following principles, where possible, to help drive modal shift and encourage greater use of public transport:

- 1 Encouraging Increased Public Transport Use**
Actively promote the use of public transport services within their organisations and across their wider networks, helping to make public transport the first choice for travel.
- 2 Communicating the Need for Change**
Clearly communicate to employees, customers and the public why we need to change how we move around our cities. Demonstrate how investing in modal shift will benefit everyone in society, from reducing congestion to improving quality of life.
- 3 Improving Air Quality and Reducing Congestion**
Support the use of zero-emissions or low-emissions vehicles to reduce air pollution, ease road congestion and minimise noise pollution, contributing to a cleaner, healthier environment for all.
- 4 Making Travel Information Accessible**
Highlight the convenience, savings and flexibility of public transport by providing easy access to information such as Translink's journey planners, ticketing tools and travel cards/passes. This ensures that everyone in your organisation can make informed travel decisions.
- 5 Promoting Health and Lifestyle Benefits**
Encourage the health and lifestyle benefits of active travel, such as walking and cycling. By integrating these options with public transport to promote a healthier, more active lifestyle.
- 6 Incorporating Public Transport into Sustainability Plans**
Include public transport as a key component of the organisation's current or future sustainability plans, ensuring that transportation solutions are aligned with long-term environmental goals and so that progress can be measured and benchmarked.
- 7 Collaborating with Translink on Future Initiatives**
Support and collaborate with Translink on future public transport initiatives, working together to improve services, infrastructure and community engagement to drive modal shift.

The *Better on Board* Charter is about more than just reducing car use; it's about creating a shift in how we think about mobility, connectivity and sustainability. By getting on board with the Charter, we can all contribute to creating a more sustainable and healthier Northern Ireland. Public transport aims to become the first choice for travel and with the support of stakeholders, their people and networks, we can achieve this transformation together.



Derry~Londonderry Charter Partners



"City Hotel Derry is delighted to pledge our support for Translink's Better on Board Charter, helping to reduce carbon emissions and enhance air quality in the area. With thousands of visitors each year and a large staff body, we understand the significance of environmentally-friendly choices for the well-being of our city. As highlighted by our Responsible Visitor Charter and Environmental Commitments, we actively promote sustainable practices, including giving the car a rest in favour of public transport and other greener travel options. This initiative by Translink represents a significant step towards a cleaner, more sustainable future for Derry, and we're proud to be doing our bit."

Conor Friel,
General Manager, City Hotel Derry



"North West Regional College is proud to support Translink's Better on Board Charter as part of our ongoing commitment to a sustainable and healthier environment for our students, staff, and college community. With campuses spanning the North West with vibrant student populations, we recognise the role that cleaner, greener travel plays in reducing carbon emissions. By supporting this Charter, we want to inspire the next environmentally conscious generation."

Leo Murphy,
Principal and Chief Executive of NWRC



"Ulster University is deeply committed to sustainability and to making a positive environmental impact across all of our campuses, and so we welcome the opportunity to join Translink's 'Better on Board' charter. Embracing public transport is a key step in reducing road congestion, improving air quality, and making Derry~Londonderry a greener city. By encouraging our staff and students to choose low-emission, sustainable travel options, we are advancing our mission to lead by example and deliver sustainable futures for all."

Professor Paul Bartholomew,
UU Vice Chancellor



"The Consumer Council are pleased to support Translink's "Better on Board Charter". Public transport provides great opportunities for passengers to connect with the integration of rail, bus and active travel across the North West. By addressing consumers' desire for choice, convenience and greater accessibility it will also help many people reduce the environmental impact of their travel. We look forward to continuing our work with Translink on current and future public transport initiatives for travel across Northern Ireland."

Noyona Chundur,
CEO of Consumer Council NI



"Businesses across Northern Ireland have an important role to play in driving modal shift by encouraging employees to increase their use of public transport. That, coupled with continued investment in public transport infrastructure, will be key to helping Northern Ireland achieve its net zero ambitions and enabling colleagues in all sectors of our economy to realise the health and wellbeing benefits of more sustainable and active travel. At NI Chamber, we are pleased to support Translink's Better on Board Charter and the roll-out of its strategic aims."

Suzanne Wylie,
Chief Executive, NI Chamber



"The Western Health and Social Care Trust is committed to sustainable travel and with over 12,000 staff we can have a real impact if we make choices which reduce our carbon footprint. We are delighted to support Translink's 'Better on Board' Charter with its aim to reduce traffic and congestion on our roads and take the available opportunities provided by public transport. This can mean fewer road traffic collisions, reduced emissions, and healthier lifestyles for those using public transport. Public transport isn't always available to all our staff, but we want to encourage staff to consider using public transport where they can, particularly to our busier sites, as a convenient and green alternative."

Teresa Molloy, Director of Planning, Performance and Corporate Services,
Western Health and Social Care Trust



"City Centre Initiative is very pleased to be supporting Translink's Better on-Board charter. To have Derry~Londonderry as one of the first cities to operate a fully emissions-free urban bus service is something special. We strive to keep working towards maintaining a clean, safe and vibrant environment within our city centre. Translink's city centre bus services provide direct drop off to the city centre with less traffic emissions and eases parking pressures throughout the city centre, which improves accessibility also. These types of initiatives are what will keep our city centre thriving and ahead of the game when it comes to environmental initiatives and reducing our carbon footprint."

Jim Roddy,
City Centre Manager, City Centre Initiative



"Visit Derry is delighted to sign up to the Better on Board Charter, and in doing so support Translink's mission to drive modal shift away from private motoring towards sustainable public transport choices. Our organisation's main aim is to promote the city and district as a world-class visitor destination, and consequently, any initiative that can help enhance air quality and reduce road congestion is to be welcomed for the benefit of both locals and visitors to the region."

Odhran Dunne,
Chief Executive at Visit Derry



"Londonderry Chamber fully supports the Better on Board Charter. Our Vision is for the North West to be globally renowned for its quality of life and economic vibrancy, and with Derry~Londonderry now operating a fully emissions-free urban bus service, we are committed to promoting the benefits of sustainable travel practices to our members. We're thrilled to collaborate with Translink to ensure that public transport contributes positively to the wellbeing of the North West in the coming years."

Anna Doherty, Chief Executive
at Londonderry Chamber



"FinTrU has always had a deep commitment to helping create a sustainable future, and we are delighted to welcome Translink's Better On Board charter. As a company with a large workforce in both Belfast and Derry~Londonderry, we will continue to encourage our employees to avail of public transport as we work as part of a collective in the area to help shape a greener environment."

Katrien Roppe, FinTrU Chief of Staff



"At Allstate, we believe in a future where sustainable travel is accessible for everyone. Supporting Translink's 'Better on Board' charter is a key part in fostering an inclusive public transport system in Belfast, ensuring that our communities thrive while protecting the environment. Together, we can create a greener, more connected city for generations to come."

Stephen McKeown, Vice President
| Managing Director, Allstate NI



"Alchemy is excited to join with Translink as a partner for their innovative Better on Board Charter. In addition to our Electric Car plan, Cycle to Work scheme and green office procedures, the Charter will help us promote greener transport options to our team and create an environmentally sustainable workplace that our people deserve. Alchemy is all about innovation and forward-thinking, and adopting an eco-friendly approach to travel is a crucial part of our vision for a sustainable future for Derry and beyond."

John Harkin, Founder and CEO of Alchemy



"As the charity which helps people to walk, wheel and cycle more for their everyday journeys, Sustrans supports the Better on Board Charter. Public transport is vital for enabling people to access work, education, everyday amenities, and friends. This is especially true for the many people who do not have access to a car. Growth in public transport is critical for achieving net-zero and growing the economy. Active travel and public transport go hand in hand – almost all public transport journeys include a walk, wheel or cycle to or from the stop or station. This means better public transport will encourage more active travel, and vice versa. Combining public transport with active travel creates healthier places and happier lives for everyone."

Claire Pollock, Head of Sustrans in Northern Ireland