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Belfast's new green gateway - a park on either side of the M1


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A computer-generated image of the South West Gateway Masterplan which will regenerate Belfast's Boucher and Andersonstown areas

BY LINDA STEWART - 21 NOVEMBER 2014

Ambitious new plans to transform the Boucher Road and Andersonstown areas of Belfast could see a park created on either side of the M1 motorway, linked by a walking and cycling bridge.

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The new South West Gateway Masterplan, launched by Social Development Minister Mervyn Storey, sets out a blueprint for regenerating one of the city's most important economic areas, stretching from the Falls and Andersonstown Roads to the railway and from Stockman's Lane in the south to the Bog Meadows and Windsor Park.

The plan, drawn up by The Paul Hogarth Company, proposes a range of measures aimed at improving air quality, community interfaces, reducing traffic congestion and creating pedestrian and cycle corridors.

It suggests making use of the Boucher Road Playing Fields and a vacant wastewater treatment works

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on the other side of the motorway to establish a new Blackstaff Park named after the river that will flow through it.

These open spaces will be linked by a new landmark bridge across the M1 that connects the Boucher Road and Falls Road and carried pedestrian and cycle traffic, although a larger bridge open to vehicles is also an option.

"Further connectivity within and beyond the South West Gateway would be achieved through the establishment of a local greenway network," a spokesman for the company said.

"Specifically this would involve a pedestrian and cycle route between Musgrave Park and the Milltown Cemetery as part of a wider greenways system linking the River Lagan and Belfast Hills.

"Additional connections via the Blackstaff River could also be explored."

The plan proposes investing in a number of quality pedestrian and cycle corridors, with lighting tree planting and signage.

"The South West Gateway has potential to play a more important ecological role in the city, having once been largely an area of wetland like the Bog Meadows Nature Reserve," the spokesman said.

"Notably, yet unknown to many, the Blackstaff River passes through the centre of the gateway to the rear of business properties before entering a long culvert on its way to the Lagan. It is proposed to create a network of ecological corridors that extend wildlife habitat and encourage greater biodiversity across the area."

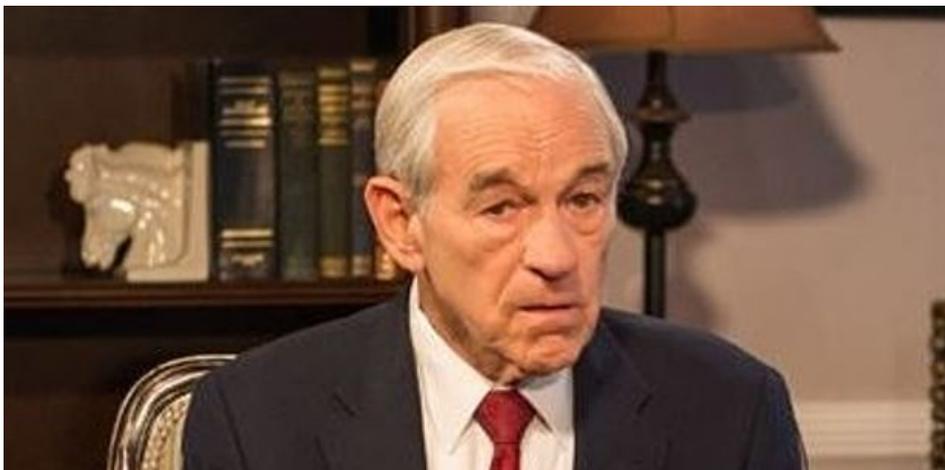
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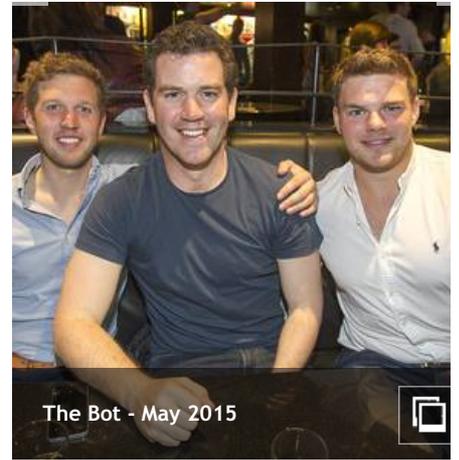
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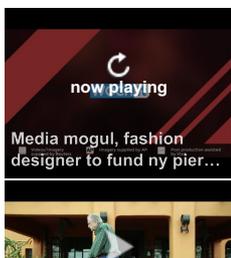


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belfastsocrates Nov 21, 2014
 Fantastic project and I really love the proposed 'green bridge' across the M1 to allow a true park connection and wildlife corridor.

Looking forward to seeing this progress!

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Heisenberg Nov 21, 2014
 Again no shortage there of money for Belfast.

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belfastsocrates Nov 21, 2014
 @Heisenberg Well....some could argue we're the engine of the NI economy and the most important locale, in what is a very small place geographically, one that needs to be invested in.

Belfast will also be top for investment and regeneration as a successful Belfast means a successful NI.

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 @belfastsocrates @Heisenberg

Derry is the second city yet gets less than one tenth of NI investment. Things haven't changed for Derry and the NW in the last 60 years. Belfast may be the engine of the NI economy, because there is no shortage of money for whatever projects they look for, yet when Derry and the NW look for a decent rail line, decent roads, they are told there is no money.

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 @Heisenberg @belfastsocrates Second city.....

Derry has some lovely parts and some fantastic historical heritage but it's no Belfast and in no position, even with lots of investment, to compete with Belfast because the urban area and hinterland around Belfast is simply too big and heavily populated.



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I agree there should be money for improved rail links to Derry but money has been invested recently such as new trains, track improvements and more will be spent one the final cost report has been published for further signal enhancements, a passing loop and regeneration of the old railway station.

Road improvements are also required but those are very expensive and take time, some smaller projects have been progressed but I agree progress should be quicker.

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Heisenberg

Nov 21, 2014

@belfastsocrates @Heisenberg

Road improvements are also required but those are very expensive and take time, some smaller projects have been progressed but I agree progress should be quicker.

Derry was promised a motorway in the 60's when they got rid of the GNR line, yet now 50 years later we see very little improvements in the roads. You do know a man cycled to Belfast from Derry and beat the train. It now takes longer to travel by rail from Derry to Belfast than it did 50 years ago, how's that for progress.

When the A5 was stopped Mr Kennedy took the money and upgraded the Belfast Greenisland road, fulfilling the 2011UUP manifesto, when they wrote that the money for the A5 would be better spent upgrading the Greenisland/Belfast road.

As for upgrading the roads being expensive, I'm sure the roads east of the Bann are also very expensive, but it doesn't seem to be a problem for the roads minister.

To conclude to those who think the treatment of Derry and the NW is not political should take heed of what Lord Laird of Artigarvan had to say in the Derry Journal a while back on the building of the A5.

He hoped the project would now be halted and described it as a "threat" to unionists. "I am delighted that the politically motivated motorway from the border with the Irish Republic and running through the United Kingdom to Londonderry is not to happen. The A5 highway was always seen as a threat to the unionist population in the west of the province. Proof of that is that its name for many in Republican circles is the United Ireland Highway".

Now how do you follow that rubbish. A threat to unionists?

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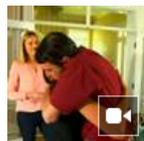
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