

## Translink ready for next phase of Derry rail project

AS reported (News, November 13), Translink attended the committee for regional development last week to give some background to the recent statement by the Minister for Regional Development in relation to Phase 2 of the project to relay the rail line between Coleraine and Londonderry. Phase 2 of the work covers re-signalling the line and building a passing loop.

We made clear Translink's commitment to the Derry line – we want to see it fully relayed and modernised. We successfully completed the first phase on time and on budget and many thousands more people are travelling on it.

We detailed the difference between an estimate in 2010 for the Phase 2 work – £30m – and a recent revised estimate of £40m.

The 2010 estimate was developed using external, independent industry specialists but we outlined the reasons it is no longer realisable, explaining what had changed since.

Inflation was obviously a factor, but also the scope of the work changed, as we have to cater for the additional growth on this line – we need to futureproof the use of six-car trains. This has meant the move of the necessary passing loop to Bellarena (which is a more complex signalling job than the original location at Figlington) and longer platforms. Necessary safety work was added to the scope of Phase 2. Lastly, Government recommended we add extra contingency into the budget.

The minister has asked we complete a review of this project and we will do this using external, independent resources.

Meantime, the target date to substantially complete this project remains unchanged at end 2016.

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Translink