

NEWS RELEASES

THE DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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CAIRNS OPENS NEW BUSWAY AND PARK & RIDE SITE

Transport Minister David Cairns, today opened a new Motorway Busway and Park & Ride site at Sprucefield.

The Minister said: **"These are major elements of our strategy to help motorists avoid disruption during the M1/Westlink Upgrade. They offer an attractive and realistic alternative for motorists travelling to Belfast on the M1 and A1 routes.**

"I would like to acknowledge the considerable efforts that have been made to ease traffic conditions and specifically the public's support for these measures. The public's patience and willingness to change how they travel has allowed the temporary traffic management measures to cope, for the benefit of all."

Roads Service has constructed a 320-space Park & Ride site at Sprucefield that will be served by dedicated Translink buses throughout the duration of the M1/Westlink works. The site is strategically placed to attract Belfast bound drivers from the A1 and the M1.

The facility to allow buses to use the hard shoulder of the M1 motorway has been increased by 3.3km. This will help all buses using the M1 (including those serving the Park and Ride site) to avoid lengthy morning peak queues at this location.

In addition, Roads Service has also recently opened a similar Park & Ride site at Blacks Road from which Translink is operating an express bus service to the City Centre.

People who need to travel into Belfast should consider making use of these facilities.

Commuters can also consider the Roads Service 'Travelwise NI' Car Share Scheme and the Park & Share opportunities at both Blacks Road and Sprucefield Park & Ride sites.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Motorway Busway uses the Hard Shoulder, for 3.3km, from Ballyskeagh Bridge to Blacks Road. This adds to the existing Motorway Busway which runs from Stockmans Lane to Broadway. The busway cost £875k and incorporates the latest technology using safety cameras, which automatically detect a stopped vehicle on the hard shoulder.

The hours of operation of the Busway are 7.30 - 9.30am and 3.00 -6.30pm. The Park & Ride facility at Sprucefield, which cost £200,000, currently caters for 320 cars but can be extended if necessary. Parking is free and there is all day security provided. Translink are providing a dedicated express bus service at peak times to the Europa Bus Centre. This runs at 15-minute intervals between 06.30 to 10.00 and 16.00 to 18.30. The existing Ulsterbus Service 238A serves the site between the peak periods.

The cost of the service will be £5 for a return trip, which includes free car parking. A five day ticket will also be available for £20 using a Smartlink card available on line at www.translink.co.uk/parkandride.

The Park & Ride facility at Blacks Road provides 220 free parking spaces with all day security. Translink are running a dedicated express bus, every 15 minutes at peak periods, to the Europa Bus Centre.

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