

Accessible Transport Strategy

Action Plan 2009 - 2012



Department for
**Regional
Development**

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GLOSSARY

ATS	Accessible Transport Strategy
BIC	British Irish Council
BMTP	Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan
CTA	Community Transport Association
DA	Disability Action
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DOE	Department of the Environment
Dptac	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social Development
ECNI	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment
FPT NI	Federation of Passenger Transport NI
Imtac	Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee
MIU	Mobility Inclusion Unit, DRD
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister
PPTD	Ports and Public Transport Division, DRD
PSV	Public Service Regulations
RTS	Regional Transportation Strategy
SNI	Shopmobility Northern Ireland
SRTP	Sub-Regional Transport Plan
SRTPB	Sub-Regional Transportation Partnership Board
RPTD	Regional Planning and Transportation Division
Vol Sec	Voluntary Sector
VSB	Voluntary Services Bureau

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) was published in March 2005 and has the vision:

"to have an accessible transport system that enables older people and people with disabilities to participate more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life".

The ATS is being implemented through the development of Action Plans. This document represents the third such Action Plan which outlines and identifies the policies and actions to be progressed through 2009-2012.

The actions seek to further reduce the barriers to transport which remain for people with disabilities and older people. They have been developed as a result of discussions with disabled and older people's organisations and relevant Government Departments. For each action the key stakeholders have been identified and an indicative timescale for implementation provided.

In implementing the ATS the following broad principles continue to be adopted:

Being proactive in our efforts to identify and remove barriers that prevent older people and people with disabilities accessing the transport system and to ensure that further barriers are not created;

Working in partnership with public, private, community and statutory transport providers to improve transport services, making them easier to use and understand so that people's confidence about using them is increased;

Implementing best practice by making sure that we keep up-to-date with best practice and reflect this when developing policies and implementation plans;

Good consultation, working openly and in partnership with people who provide transportation services and facilities and those who use them. We strive to maintain good communication with older people and people with disabilities to listen to their views and exchange information; and

Value for money in targeting available resources towards initiatives that are affordable, sustainable and that maximise the benefits for older people and people with disabilities.

SUMMARY OF MAIN BARRIERS TO TRAVEL

The ATS identified five main areas as constituting significant barriers for older people and disabled people:

- the physical barriers that prevent people from getting access to transport services;
- attitudinal or psychological barriers that prevent or discourage older people and people with disabilities from using transport services. This could involve the behaviour and attitudes of transport staff towards their customers or concerns that people have about using transport, for example because of fear of crime, abuse or attack etc;
- the kinds of information needed by users and potential users of accessible transport services both in terms of the details provided and the way it is provided;
- the type of services needed by older people and people with disabilities; and
- the affordability of accessible transport services available to older people and people with disabilities.

The actions contained within ATS Action Plan seek to reduce and remove these barriers.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The ATS also identified seven Strategic Objectives and supporting policies that remain relevant. They are:

- SO1.** To manage effectively the transition to a fully accessible transport network in partnership with key stakeholders to maximise the benefits for older people and people with disabilities;
- SO2.** Ensure that the Disability Discrimination Act requirements are met and affordable adjustments are made so that accessibility for people with disabilities is a condition of public money being spent on all new public transport investment;

- SO3.** To develop, in partnership with key stakeholders, an integrated, fully accessible public transport system which will enable older people and people with disabilities to travel by bus, train, taxi, private and community transport services in safety and in comfort and move easily between these modes;
- SO4.** To enable older people and people with disabilities to travel safely using cars and other means of private transport;
- SO5.** To address attitudinal and psychological barriers that prevent or discourage older people or people with disabilities from using transport services and facilities that are available to them;
- SO6.** To ensure that information in a range of formats is available for all public transport services, including the full range of accessible services supported by the Department, to enable people to plan and make these journeys easily; and
- SO7.** To provide help with travel costs to enable older people and people with disabilities to use the transport services available to them.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS 2007 - 2009

The previous ATS Action Plan 2007-2009 was wide ranging, covering over 100 individual actions. A significant number of these have been achieved while others are classified as ongoing. Many of the remaining actions extended beyond the two year Action Plan period.

In the period of the 2007-2009 Action Plan notable achievements included:

- the introduction of 60+ Smartpass scheme;
- the expansion of Door-2-Door transport services to urban areas with a population of 10,000 including in Belfast & Derry/Londonderry;
- prioritisation of tackling the abuse of accessible parking bays during the implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE);
- introduction of the Taxi Act;

- the distribution of the Travel Safe Guide, providing advice on how to use public transport for people with a learning disability;
- replacement of automatic ramps on buses with manual ramps;
- the introduction of 395 accessible buses to the Translink fleet including the introduction of new rural accessible buses;
- improvement of signage on buses to promote priority seating;
- start of the consultation process to introduce legislation to extend part III of the DDA to transport services in N.Ireland; and
- consultation with disabled people on transport services.

These actions have been carried out by a range of organisations including the Department, Translink and Imtac; and by individual disabled people and older people and their representative organisations. The Department would like to thank all those involved in undertaking the actions within the Action Plan which has helped to overcome some barriers and helped to improve the accessibility of the transport network.

MONITORING

The Regional Transportation Strategy Steering Group retains responsibility for monitoring progress on the ATS. The Department's Mobility Inclusion Unit will continue to provide regular updates on progress on the implementation of the ATS.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY REVIEW

The ATS was developed within the context of the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) which was published in 2002. A review of the RTS is under way. Following the completion of the RTS Review, the Department may consider reviewing the ATS to ensure that it remains relevant.

EQUALITY

A full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was carried out on the ATS. This can be accessed on the DRD website at www.drdni.gov.uk.

CONSULTATION

The ATS draft Action Plan 2009-2012 was subject to a full public consultation process. This process started on 31st March 2009 and concluded on 7th July 2009.

As part of this consultation process the Department carried out a series of public and focus group meetings. The Department is pleased that it received an increased number of responses to the consultation process compared to previous years. A full description of the consultation events and a summary of the consultation returns can be found in Chapter 3 of this document.

CHAPTER 2

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2009-2012

Strategic Objective One

To manage effectively the transition to a fully accessible transport network in partnership with key stakeholders to maximise the benefits for older people and people with disabilities.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P01	Ensure, where appropriate, that any legislative changes at National level which impact on people with disabilities' right of access to transport services or to the accessibility standards for transport vehicles are incorporated in Northern Ireland legislation in parallel with changes in GB.		
P01 A01	Introduce legislation to extend Part III of the DDA to transport services in Northern Ireland to maintain parity with Great Britain.	OFMDFM	January 2010
P01 A02	Develop a Code of Practice to assist providers of transport services in Northern Ireland to meet new duties under Part III of the DDA.	ECNI & Partners	March 2010
P01 A03	Require trains undergoing substantial refurbishment to be made as compliant with the Passenger Reduced Mobility Technical Standard for Interoperability as possible.	PPTD	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P01 A04	Undertake a publicity campaign to promote the Disability Discrimination (Transport Vehicles) Regulations and the Code of Practice.	ECNI & Partners	Early 2010
P02	Enforce effectively any Accessibility Regulations that apply to new buses, coaches, taxis and trains.		
P02 A01	Carry out a review of enforcement procedures relating to Accessibility Regulations with regard to relevant public transport vehicles (including Belfast Public Hire Taxis)	DOE	July 2010
P02 A02	Examine opportunities for vehicle inspection procedures and licensing procedures to provide data about the introduction of new accessible vehicles in N.Ireland	DOE	July 2010
P03	Continue to support the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee to enable it to be a main source of independent advice to service providers and departments on all transport matters that affect the mobility of older people and people with disabilities.		

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P03 A01	Imtac will prepare and agree with DRD an annual work programme detailing such transport matters that affect older people and people with disabilities as the committee think appropriate.	Imtac MIU PPTD	31 st March each year
P03 A02	Hold 4 full committee meetings of Imtac each year. Older people and people with disabilities will be encouraged to attend these meetings.	Imtac	Annually
P03 A03	Submit to the Minister responsible for DRD a report for the previous calendar year setting out Imtac's achievements and advice to the Minister on transport matters that affect older people and people with disabilities as the committee think appropriate.	Imtac	By end of June each year
P03 A04	Hold 3 meetings per year of the Imtac subcommittees including Public Transport, Information & Training and Personal Mobility Working Groups.	Imtac	Annually
P03 A05	Recruit annually new members through an open recruitment process to represent older people and people with disabilities to Imtac.	Imtac	Annually

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P04	Consult with older people and people with disabilities and their representative organisations at an early stage in the development of new transport policies and projects and on the detailed implementation of access features incorporated in new transport infrastructure.		
P04 A01	Consult with older people and people with disabilities and their representative organisations at an early stage when developing new transport policies and projects.	DRD DOE Translink	Ongoing
P04 A02	Consult with CTA about vehicle design, service co-ordination, better information provision, training standards etc, in relation to Community Transport operations.	PPTD CTA	Ongoing
P05	Work closely with the Department for Transport, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government and the Irish Department of Transport as they develop standards and good practice.		
P05 A01	Regularly review policy, standards and good practice guidance produced in Great Britain, Europe and elsewhere and consider whether/how these can most effectively be implemented.	Imtac MIU	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P05 A02	Distribute publications on policy, standards and good practice in accessible transport to the relevant departments, groups and organisations.	Imtac MIU	Ongoing
P05 A03	Attend and update DPTAC with current status of ATS.	MIU	Quarterly
P05 A04	Organise and lead the biannual meetings of BIC with other administrations to share best practice.	MIU	Biannually
P05 A05	Identify training opportunities which are currently available between administrations.	MIU	June 2010
P05 A06	Identify opportunities to improve travel information across administrations.	MIU	June 2010
P05 A07	Investigate commonality of Concessionary Fare schemes across administrations.	MIU PPTD	June 2010
P05 A08	Participate in an annual meeting between advisory organisations to share current best practice and information.	Imtac	February each year

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P06	Provide appropriate, accredited, disability awareness and diversity training for staff involved in work that impact on the accessibility of the transport system for older people and people with disabilities.		
P06 A01	Disability Awareness and Equality training to be provided to all front line staff and incorporated into driver training.	Translink	Complete by October 2010
P06 A02	Disability Awareness and Diversity training will be provided to all DRD staff.	DRD	Ongoing
P07	Key considerations for the evaluation of accessible transport initiatives will include: affordability, the number of people who will benefit, the extent to which they will benefit and whether they would otherwise be denied access to transport.		
P07 A01	Review Imtac's findings on the policies and actions contained in the Accessible Transport Strategy and their impact on people with a learning disability.	PPTD MIU	March 2010
P08	Improve the factual base about the extent of the transport needs of older people and people with disabilities to ensure evidence-based development of policies and programmes.		

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P08 A01	Imtac will identify priorities for research about the particular transport requirements of older people and people with disabilities, including attitudes towards the transport system and report to MIU on key areas.	Imtac PPTD MIU	May each year
P08 A02	Distribute the revised DPTAC guidance for the design of large passenger ships amongst ferry operators in N.Ireland.	Imtac	Following publication of Dptac guidance
P08 A03	Distribute to transport providers and others any good practice and research around accessible transport systems as agreed between Imtac and MIU.	Imtac MIU	Ongoing
P08 A04	Consider outcomes of Imtac's research on the transport needs of disabled younger people.	PPTD MIU Imtac	July 2010
P09	Ensure that there is effective communication of the Accessible Transport Strategy and understanding of the issues by key partners.		
P09 A01	Raise awareness of the ATS and its policies within DRD and key partners.	MIU	April 2010

Strategic Objective Two

Ensure that Disability Discrimination Act requirements are met and affordable adjustments are made so that accessibility for people with disabilities is a condition of public money being spent on all new public transport investment.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P10	Ensure that best practice in accessible design is followed, when providing new public transport infrastructure.		
P10 A01	Require proposals for any new bus stations or for major refurbishment of bus stations to demonstrate how these provide for the requirements of older people and people with disabilities by meeting agreed standards in accessible design.	PPTD Translink	Ongoing
P10 A02	Specify high standards of accessibility based on best practice experience in any contracts let in relation to the construction of the Belfast Rapid Transit network.	Rapid Transit Team	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P10 A03	Review compliance of Ulsterbus stations in relation to DDA standards and implement any remedial actions as required.	Translink	Ongoing
P11	Promote the use of accessible vehicles on public transport and alternative transport services that are supported financially by Government.		
P11 A01	Disseminate guidance on the design of small buses (9-22 seats) to public, private, community and statutory sector transport providers.	MIU PPTD CTA	As required

Strategic Objective Three

To develop, in partnership with key stakeholders, an integrated, fully accessible public transport system which will enable older people and people with disabilities to travel by bus, train, taxi, private and community transport services in safety and in comfort and move easily between these modes

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P12	Ensure that the pedestrian and traffic environments are designed and managed in a way that enables older people and people with disabilities to move around safely and with confidence.		
P12 A01	Undertake improvements to the walking network within towns and cities as outlined in the SRTP and BMTP.	Roads Service	Ongoing
P12 A02	Review level of funding for Shopmobility within N.Ireland.	PPTD	March 2010
P12 A03	Investigate the potential of a Northern Ireland wide membership scheme for Shopmobility. Work with Shopmobility NI to introduce new urban schemes.	PPTD SNI	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P13	Improve access to public bus and rail services to maximise their use by older people and people with disabilities to reduce the need for alternative transport systems.		
P13 A01	Improve traffic management and bus stop infrastructure in “Other Urban Areas” to support the RTS initiative to provide better urban bus services.	Roads Service	Ongoing
P13 A02	Develop and implement Quality Bus Corridors to support the operation of high frequency, accessible bus services on the Belfast “Metro” network.	Roads Service	Ongoing
P13 A03	Implement a review programme aimed at improving the siting of bus stops and identify opportunities for providing hard standings at rural bus stops.	Translink Roads Service	Ongoing
P13 A04	Improve signage and pedestrian access to bus and rail stations.	Translink Roads Service	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P13 A05	Introduce into operation 252 Ulsterbus and 38 Metro buses that are fully compliant with the PSV accessibility regulations.	Translink	2012
P13 A06	Introduce into operation 20 new trains that are fully compliant with the Rail Vehicles Accessibility Regulations.	Translink	2012
P14	Support alternative means of transport at reasonable fares for those people who cannot or find it difficult to use the public bus and rail network and ensure that these services provide their users with opportunities to access business, education, recreational, shopping and health care facilities.		
P14 A01	Analyse usage statistics for current Door-2-Door services and review the current deployment of buses.	PPTD	Ongoing
P14 A02	Retender Door-2-Door contracts for all urban areas over 10,000 in population.	PPTD	April 2010

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P14 A03	Continue the roll out of Dial-a-Lift services in rural areas.	PPTD	Early 2010
P14 A04	Review the application process for people applying for Concessionary Fares Smart Passes.	PPTD	March 2010
P14 A05	Carry out a social audit to assess the non-financial, social, economic and environmental impact of the Door-2-Door scheme in urban and rural areas.	PPTD	April 2010
P14 A06	Undertake customer surveys on the operation of the Door-2-Door scheme in urban areas.	PPTD	Ongoing
P14 A07	Undertake research into the current level of use of the Concessionary Fares scheme by older people and disabled people and ascertain reasons for non-use.	PPTD	March 2010

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P15	Develop a community transport sector that advocates a strong volunteering ethos and adopts best practice in the management and operation of their transport initiatives which focus on providing transport services for people, communities and groups that experience mobility impairment.		
P15 A01	Provide an information and advice service for voluntary and community based transport providers.	CTA	Ongoing
P15 A02	Improve the skills base of the community transport sector through an annual training programme covering best practice in the management and operation of community based transport schemes.	CTA	Ongoing
P15 A03	Promote the MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) and PATS (Passenger Assistance Training Scheme) as minimum training standards for CT Schemes supported by DRD.	PPTD CTA	Ongoing
P16	Ensure that a higher proportion of public hire taxis are accessible, allowing more older people and people with disabilities the same opportunities, at the same cost, to travel as those without a mobility impairment.		

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P16 A01	Consider options for a package of measures to improve access to taxis.	DOE	September 2012
P16 A02	Roads Service to review the provision of taxi ranks in all towns and cities.	Roads Service	Ongoing
P16 A03	Implement on street taxi ranks included within SRTP.	Roads Service	Ongoing
P17	Ensure that new development in the built environment properly addresses the transport needs of older people and people with disabilities in their design.		
P17 A01	Ensure that the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users have been properly addressed in proposals by developers.	DOE Roads Service	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P17 A02	Ensure that planning policy contained in “PPS3 –Access Movement and Parking” “PPS13 – Transportation and Land Use” and guidance contained in Development Control Advice Note 11 are being followed by developers.	DOE	Ongoing
P17 A03	Consider the outcome of the Access and Mobility study for Belfast City Centre.	DSD Roads Service PPTD	Ongoing
P17 A04	Introduce a pilot Wayfinder system within Belfast City Centre in Donegall Place.	DSD	2011
P18	Encourage a partnership approach between older people, people with disabilities and public, private, community and statutory transport providers to ensure that each sector can build on the experience of others in the delivery of accessible transport services. (PO18/S03)		

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P18 A01	Provide information about best practice in relation to accessibility between providers of public, private hire, voluntary and community and statutory bodies that provide transport.	Imtac MIU Translink CTA	Ongoing
P18 A02	Promote training opportunities that will assist people and organisations to provide better quality, accessible transport services that are responsive to the requirements of older people and people with disabilities.	CTA Imtac	Ongoing
P20	Provide parking concessions for people with disabilities through the Blue Badge scheme.		
P20 A01	Regularly review and update publicity leaflets and other information provided to applicants and holders about the operation of the Blue Badge scheme and ensure that these are available in a range of accessible formats.	Roads Service	Ongoing

Strategic Objective Four

To enable older people and people with disabilities to travel safely using cars and other means of private transport.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P21	Ensure that adequate parking is provided for Blue Badge holders in convenient locations, to enable easy access to activities and facilities.		
P21 A01	Review the adequacy of parking provision for people with disabilities in car parks owned by DRD and improve where appropriate.	Roads Service	Ongoing
P21 A02	Review the provision of parking bays provided for people with disabilities in all towns and cities.	Roads Service	Ongoing
P21 A03	The Department and disability groups will work together to ensure the Blue Badge scheme operated by DRD is enforced effectively.	Roads Service MIU Vol Sec	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P22	Continue support for the Northern Ireland Mobility centre to enable it to carry out driving assessments and assist people with disabilities to develop their driving skills		
P22 A01	Provide an efficient driver assessment service and driving school for people with disabilities through the NI Mobility Centre.	PPTD	Ongoing
P23	Develop appropriate measures to enhance the safety of older drivers in Northern Ireland.		
P23 A01	Assess the outcome of the Department for Transport review on older drivers in Great Britain and progress, where appropriate, proposals for improving the safety of older drivers in Northern Ireland.	DOE	Ongoing

Strategic Objective Five

To address attitudinal and psychological barriers that prevent or discourage older people and people with disabilities from using transport services and facilities that are available to them.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P24	Raise awareness amongst transport providers and general public of the needs of older people and people with disabilities when using transport.		
P24 A01	Provide information to the general public on the needs of older people and people with disabilities when using public transport.	Translink MIU Imtac	Ongoing
P24 A02	Imtac to work with Translink marketing team to better reflect older people and disabled people in the promotion of services through accessible information and advertisements.	Translink Imtac	Ongoing
P25	Promote independent mobility by raising awareness among older people and people with disabilities about the accessible transport opportunities available to them and provide help and support to address the concerns they may have about using these services.		

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P25 A01	Incorporate best practice in the design of bus and rail stations to improve personal security and reduce fear of crime for passengers.	Translink	Ongoing
P25 A02	Use CCTV on public transport vehicles to deter crime and vandalism.	Translink	Ongoing
P25 A03	Provide advice for passengers about personal security on public transport.	Translink	Ongoing
P25 A04	Conduct a public information campaign to discourage attacks on public transport vehicles and raise awareness of the problem.	Translink	Ongoing
P25 A05	Continue to encourage more schools to take part in the Translink Safety Bus campaign which aims to tackle problem behaviour of pupils on buses.	Translink	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P25 A06	Report on the pilot buddying scheme.	PPTD VSB	June 2010
P26	Deter car users from driving and parking in a manner that compromises access to the transport system for older people and people with disabilities.		
P26 A01	Enforce parking and waiting restrictions.	Roads Service	Ongoing
P26 A02	Support and organise a “Baywatch” campaign aimed at raising public awareness about the problems that result from the abuse of parking bays provided for people with disabilities.	Baywatch Partners	Annually
P26 A03	Blue Badge enforcement team to enforce the misuse of blue badges in all towns and cities.	Roads Service	Ongoing
P26 A04	Enforce waiting restrictions on arterial roads in towns and cities including enforcement at bus stops.	Roads Service	Ongoing

Strategic Objective Six

To ensure that information in a range of formats is available for all public transport services, including the full range of accessible services supported by the Department, to enable people to plan and make journeys easily.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P27	Adopt best practice in the design of all information produced about transportation policies, initiatives and other guidance material and disseminate guidance about good practice in information design to transport providers.		
P27 A01	Work with Imtac and other specialist organisations to identify and distribute best practice for transport providers on the communication of accessible transport information.	MIU Imtac	Ongoing
P27 A02	Examine the business case of introducing audio and visual announcements of travel information on buses and if successful bid for resources for its implementation.	PPTD	Early 2010
P27 A03	Produce access policy for bus and rail services.	Translink	February 2010

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P28	Ensure that all information provided about transport services that are financially supported by Government is made available in formats that are appropriate to the particular needs of older people and people with disabilities.		
P28 A01	Transport service providers will provide DRD with copies of all information issued about services that are financially supported by DRD.	Translink FPT NI CTA MIU	Ongoing
P29	Ensure that information systems are out in place to support the development of accessible transport chains.		
P29 A01	Update the Travel Safe guide.	MIU	December 2010
P29 A02	Provide better information about accessible public transport opportunities and passenger support services provided by Translink for older people and people with disabilities.	Translink	Ongoing
P29 A03	Investigate possibilities to provide timetable information by text messaging.	Translink	April 2010

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P29 A04	Review and republish the series of transport fact-sheets and ensure these are made widely available.	Imtac	Ongoing
P29 A05	Update the information contained in the Access Guide to bus and rail passenger facilities and distribute to the public.	Translink	Annually
P29 A06	Update Accessible Transport information to the N.I Direct Website.	PPTD	Ongoing
P29 A07	Produce accessible timetable information for bus & rail services.	Translink	Ongoing
P29 A08	Update accessible information on Translink internet site.	Translink	Review March 2010

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Timescale
P29 A09	Examine the current provision of Audio and Visual information at all main bus and rail stations.	Translink	Review March 2010

Strategic Objective Seven

To provide help with travel costs to enable older people and people with disabilities to use the transport services available to them.

Ref	Policy and Actions	Who	Timescale
P30	Provide a range of travel concessions for older people and people with disabilities through the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fare Scheme.		
P30 A01	Consider the options for further expansion of the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fare Scheme.	PPTD	2010
P30 A02	Continue to monitor the roll out of the Assisted Rural Transport Scheme (ARTS).	PPTD / DARD	2010
P32	Provide practical assistance with travel to help people with disabilities to access training and job opportunities.		
P32 A01	Raise awareness of the range of measures provided by Department of Employment and Learning in the 'Access to Work Programme'.	DEL	Ongoing

CHAPTER 3

CONSULTATION PROCESS

This chapter summarises the consultation process of the ATS draft Action Plan 2009-2012 and the responses received.

Consultation Period

The ATS draft Action Plan 2009-2012 was published for consultation on 31st March 2009. Consultation concluded on 7th July 2009.

Document Distribution

The draft Action Plan was distributed to a range of stakeholders and individuals contained within the Department's Section 75 and Imtac's contact lists.

A letter was attached to the document informing the consultees on how they could receive further information and respond to the consultation. The document was also made available on the Department's website www.drdni.gov.uk and in different formats when requested.

To make it easier to respond, a short questionnaire was produced on the content of the draft Action Plan. The questions within were:

1. Has the improvement in the accessibility of public transport (i.e. buses, trains, Door-2-Door services etc) increased the travel opportunities for disabled people and older people?
2. What are the remaining barriers to making public transport accessible for disabled people and older people?
3. The new ATS draft Action Plan includes new actions to improve the accessibility of transport, do you agree with them?
4. Are there any actions which have not been included within the draft Action Plan that you would like to see included?
5. What should the priorities be for future investment to improve the accessibility of the transport system?

6. Is the ATS still relevant as a stand alone document or do you think it would be better to be included within other Government transport documents?

Public Meetings

The Department and its advisors Imtac hosted a number of public consultation meetings to discuss the issues contained within the draft Action Plan. These meetings were held in June 2009 at the locations, dates and venues below:

Date	Location	Venue
Monday 15 th June 2009	Ballymena	Tullyglass Hotel
Tuesday 16 th June 2009	Omagh	Silverbirch Hotel
Friday 19 th June 2009	Derry/ Londonderry	City Hotel
Monday 22 nd June 2009	Cookstown	Gortalowry House
Tuesday 23 rd June 2009	Enniskillen	Fermanagh House
Wednesday 24 th June 2009	Newry	Canal Court Hotel
Friday 26 th June 2009	Belfast	Grosvenor House

The meetings were publicised through local and regional newspapers and on the Department's website. Flyers were also produced and distributed to representative organisations and local libraries.

In total over 70 people attended including disabled people, older people and their representative organisations. The meetings were facilitated by a mix of Departmental officials and Imtac members and secretariat.

The Department was invited to attend a number of other meetings with representative groups as part of the consultation process. These were: Age Sector Platform, DRD Disability Forum, Craigavon Community Network, Belfast Healthy Cities, RNIB, Imtac and CTA.

Alternative Formats

The Department provided the ATS draft Action Plan in a number of alternative formats. An increased number of requests for these formats were received from previous years. The table below shows the number of alternative formats supplied during the consultation period. A number of these alternative formats were available to download from the Department's website, statistics for which are not included in the below table.

Format	Number Requested
Hard Copy	40
Large Print Hard Copy	20
Audio CD	1
Daisy	12
Braille	1
Easy Read	30
Other Languages	0

Summary of Public Meetings Consultations

The series of public meetings held throughout June 2009 was an opportunity for the Department to hear the views of those directly affected by the ATS. This allowed the Department to hear at first hand what effect the Accessible Transport Strategy and other DRD programmes had on meeting transport need.

It is clear from the consultation exercise that progress has been made in improving the accessibility of the transport network for older people and disabled people but that barriers to travel still exist. Many within the public meetings recognised the introduction of new buses and trains in their local areas. Others highlighted the introduction of Door-2-Door services and the extension of free travel on public transport for those aged 60+ which have increased their use of transport.

Respondents also highlighted the services which were offered by the Rural Community Transport Partnerships which provided vital access to transport in rural areas. Other topics mentioned were improvements which have made a significant difference including the introduction of DPE which has helped reduce problem parking at bus stops and on main roads and the continued need to support Shopmobility services.

Across the consultation meetings, however, there were a number of common themes that the public felt continued to be required to be addressed. These were:

- lack of transport in rural areas which is leading to increased social isolation;
- cost of transport, particularly in rural areas;
- lack of free travel on public transport for disabled people;
- lack of direct bus services to major health facilities from rural areas;
- attitudes of current staff involved in transport both at the front line and at administrative level;
- lack of accessible information about transport services;
- lack of confidence of some older and disabled people about using public transport;
- need for more joined up thinking linking transport services together, i.e. Translink, Door-2-Door, Shopmobility; and

- lack of audio visual announcements on buses and at bus stops.

The consultation exercise highlighted the difference in accessibility between urban and rural areas. In particular it was highlighted that the Greater Belfast Area generally had more accessible transport than rural areas.

Although significant improvements and enhancements of services have been introduced to public transport in places such as Derry/Londonderry and Belfast, many at the public meetings still viewed services as being inaccessible.

A brief summary of each of the public meetings is available on the Department's website.

Conclusions from Written Responses

A total of 37 written responses were received to the consultation process. Of these, 8 were received on the consultation response questionnaire and a further 7 responses answered the questionnaire questions directly. A small number of responses signalled that they were content with the draft Action Plan and had no additional comments.

A breakdown of the responses is shown below:

Respondent	Number of Respondents
Service Providers	3
Voluntary Organisation	11
Individual	3
Local Authority/ District Council	7
Public Body	9
Other	4
Total	37

Summary of Responses to Questions

All of the 37 written responses to the ATS draft Action Plan were broken down into individual comments and cross referenced to the relevant Action or Policy. Two graphs show the number of written comments received against each action category and policy. These were:

Annex B – which highlights the number of written comments against each policy contained within the ATS draft Action Plan; and

Annex C – which highlights the number of written comments against each main category contained within the draft Action Plan.

The responses to the individual questions posed on the action plan are summarised below.

Question 1

Has the improvement in the accessibility of public transport (i.e. buses, trains, Door-2-Door services etc) increased the travel opportunities for disabled people and older people?

15 of the 37 written consultee responses responded directly to the questions posed. Of these, 12 suggested that the transportation network had improved, 2 suggested it hadn't while 1 response questioned the wording of the question.

Of the 22 other responses there was general support for the progress made on the accessibility of the transport network to date, particularly with the increased investment in new buses, trains, and Door-2-Door services. The extension of the Concessionary Fares Scheme to people over 60 was also highlighted as a success by many.

A small number of the consultees suggested that there had been no or little improvement to the accessibility of the transport network in their specific area. In particular, they highlighted the limited availability of transport services in rural areas. Others stated that public buses, Door-2-Door and Community Transport were not accessible to a number of disabled people due to the design of the services and infrastructure.

Although the overall impression from the responses was that things had improved in recent years, many used this question to highlight where the transport network was not working as well as it should. These comments have been summarised in question 2.

Question 2

What are the remaining barriers to making public transport accessible for disabled people and older people?

Transport in rural areas remained a problem and was seen as a contributor to social isolation. A number of respondents also stated that more accessible transport information including timetables, websites, and travel information was required. The lack of confidence of some disabled people and older people was also highlighted as a specific issue.

A number of responses highlighted that there was poor access to hospital and medical facilities from rural areas.

The lack of an audio and visual announcements system on buses and at bus stops was also raised by a number of respondents.

Many of the consultation responses stated that they would like to see better integration of transport services and modes e.g. between bus, rail, Door-2-Door and Shopmobility. The lack of free travel for disabled people as part of the concessionary fares scheme was also highlighted as a major barrier to travel for disabled people.

Although many reported that parking provision had recently improved due to the introduction of DPE, many responses highlighted the misuse of the Blue Badge parking bays as a problem in certain areas.

The current operational areas for Door-2-Door were highlighted as a barrier with a number of responses highlighting the operational areas as being too small in some towns.

Finally the attitudes of both operational and administrative staff was mentioned as an issue of concern to some.

Question 3

The new ATS draft Action Plan includes new actions to improve the accessibility of transport, do you agree with them?

Of the 14 consultee responses who answered question 3 directly, 10 agreed with the actions contained within the action plan.

Of the other 19 respondents who commented on this question many included specific comments on individual actions.

In general the remainder of the respondents stated that they agreed with all or the majority of the actions. A number of respondents however suggested alternatives which should be considered. These included a number of responses questioning the term “ongoing” which was used as the timescale for a number of actions.

Other issues raised suggested that some of the wording contained within the action plan should be more precise and specific. A number expressed frustration on the lack of progress on the implementation of the pilot Audio Visual system for buses.

Question 4

Are there any actions which have not been included within the draft Action Plan that you would like to see included?

A number of improvements to the draft action plan were recorded during the first 3 questions within the responses. A number of respondents however suggested that a greater degree of integration was required between modes and transport services, particularly in rural areas.

Other examples of possible new actions included the potential to begin further travel training for older people and people with disabilities who lack confidence in using the public transport system and possible actions on introducing new training.

Question 5

What should the priorities be for future investment to improve the accessibility of the transport system?

A number of priorities were included by a range of respondents. These included piloting an Audio Visual system on buses, introducing new training for operational and administrative staff and expanding the concessionary fares scheme to people with disabilities.

Transport services were also highlighted as requiring further improvements including the potential to expand the Door-2-Door services to rural areas and improvements in its operation in urban areas.

Funding Concessionary travel for disabled people was also highlighted as being an area where a priority should be given to resources.

Question 6

Is the ATS still relevant as a stand alone document or do you think it would be better to be included within other Government Transport documents?

The vast majority of the consultation respondents suggested that the ATS should remain as a stand alone document. Many stated that if it were to be incorporated into other transport strategies and policies its importance would be lost.

Final Action Plan 2009-2012

Each of the written responses from the consultation process was broken down into separate individual comments from the respondents submissions. A detailed assessment of all comments was then undertaken linking the comments to individual actions from the draft Action Plan.

ANNEX A

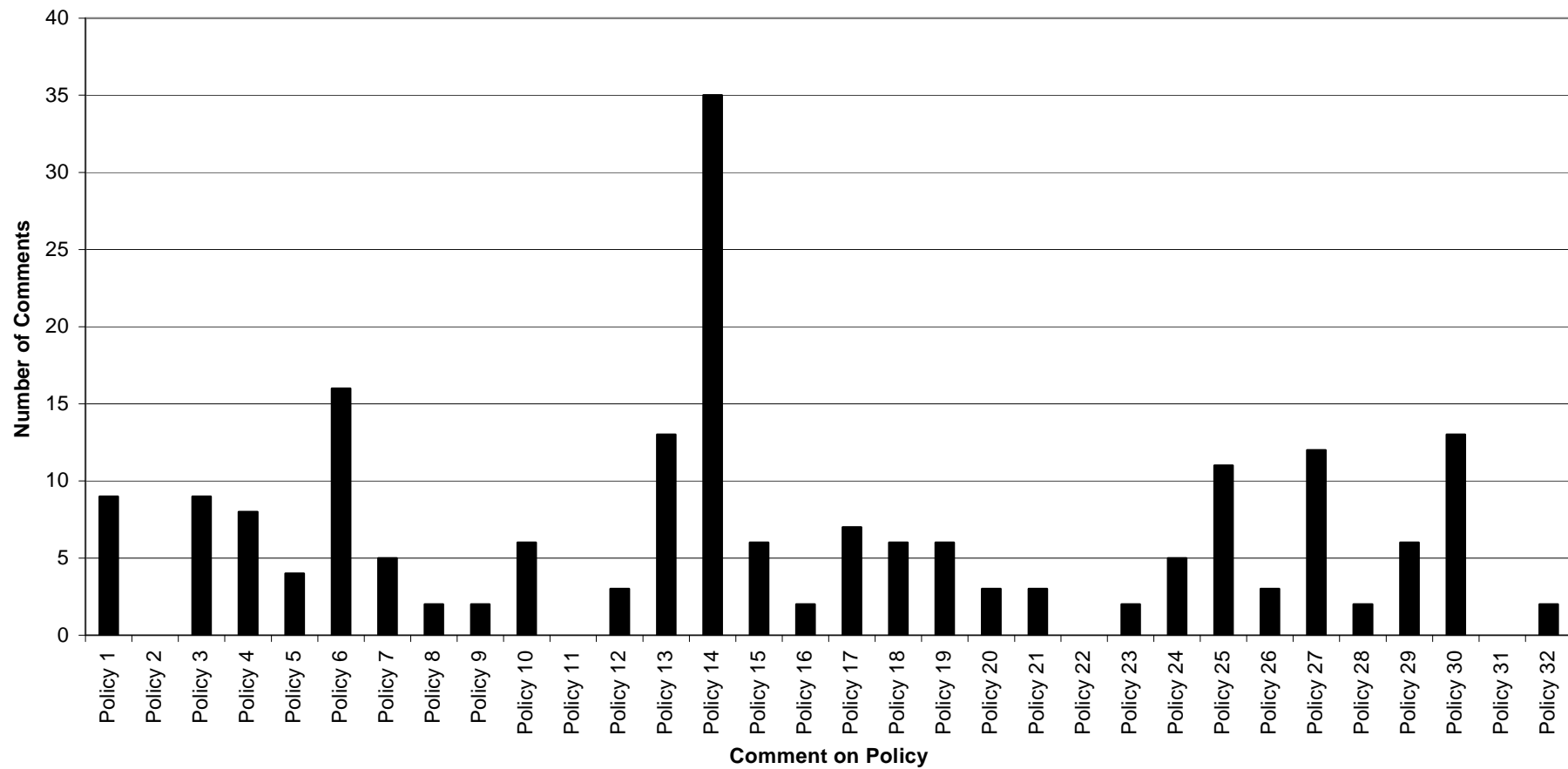
LIST OF CONSULTEE RETURNS

Consultee Reference Number	Consultee
1	Access to Benefits
2	Age Sector Platform
3	Alzheimer's Society
4	Antrim Borough Council
5	Arthritis Care
6	Ballymena Borough Council
7	Belfast City Council - Development Department
8	Belfast City Council - Good Relations Unit
9	Belfast Healthy Cities
10	Belfast International Airport
11	Can Do (South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust)
12	Can Do Too
13	Community Transport Association
14	Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside
15	Disability Action
16	Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
17	Enable NI
18	FDA
19	Go Skills
20	Health and Social Care Board
21	Imtac
22	Individual - Ann Gamble
23	Individual - Ivan Baxter
24	Individual - Max O'Brien
25	Joint Democracy Working
26	Larne Borough Council
27	N.Ireland Tourist Board
28	North Down Borough Council
29	Northern Health & Social Care Trust
30	Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)
31	Rural Community Network
32	Southern Health and Social Care Trust – Directorate of Mental Health & Disability Services
33	The Historic Monuments Council

Consultee Reference Number	Consultee
34	The Omnibus Partnership
35	Ulster Society for the Protection of the Countryside
36	Upper Springfield Development Association
37	Volunteer Development Agency

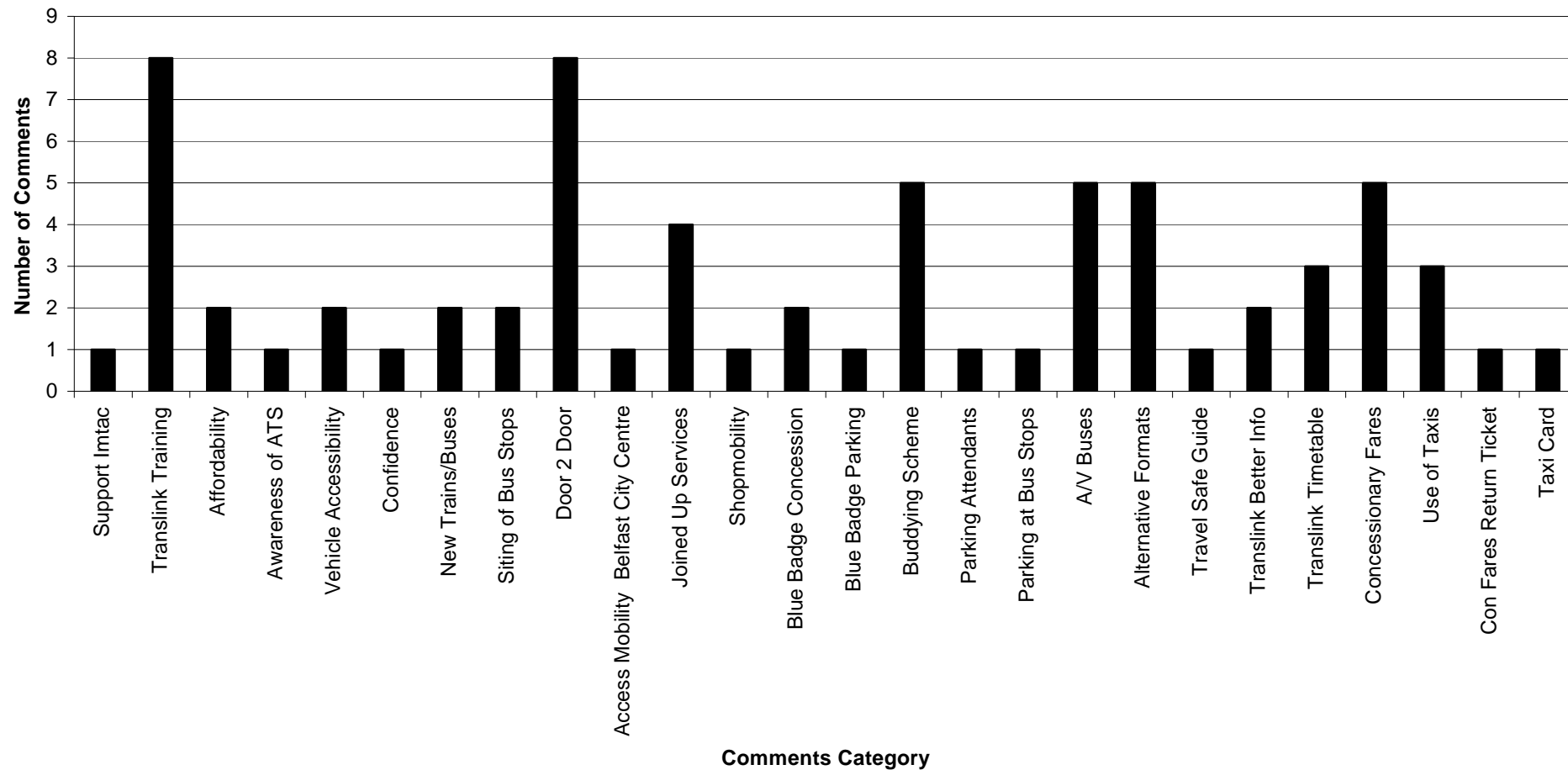
ANNEX B

Draft ATS Action Plan Summary of Written Comments by Policy



ANNEX C

Draft ATS Action Plan Summary of Written Comments by Category



ANNEX D

Influences on ATS Action Plan 2009-2012

	Topic Area	Departmental Response
1	Timescales	
	A number of consultees commented on the realism of the timescales within the action plan with some concerned with the “ongoing” nature of the actions.	The Department recognises the concerns expressed on this issue and has reassessed a number of timescales within the Action Plan. The “ongoing” timescales for a number of actions have also been reassessed however the Department feels that these give a continuing commitment to the action within the plan.
2	Training	
	Training of staff involved in the operation, administration and planning of transport was raised by many respondents.	The Department recognises the importance of training. The Action Plan includes a number of actions regarding improving training.
3	Door-2-Door	
	A number of returns praised the operation of the Door-2-Door service however some commented on improvements which could be made to vehicles, service levels and areas of operation.	The Department is pleased with the many positive comments on the Door-2-Door service and will strive to improve the operation of the service, taking onboard the comments and suggestions. The Action Plan includes actions to review the services, undertake a social audit and retender the Door-2-Door contracts.
4	Concessionary Fares	
	Consultees requested that the Department	The Department will continue to examine ways of extending the

	Topic Area	Departmental Response
	again investigate the potential to free travel for people with disabilities.	concessionary fare scheme as part of the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).
5	Translink Issues	
	A number of specific issues on the bus and rail network were highlighted during the consultation process.	These issues have been passed to Translink to investigate.
6	Rural Transport	
	The lack of transport in rural areas was highlighted by many as being one of the major barriers to disabled people and older people travelling.	On 10 th November 2009 the Department announced the introduction of Dial-a-Lift and Assisted Rural Transport Schemes (ARTS) which will improve the access and costs of transport in rural areas. The ARTS is being supported by DARD.
7	Audio Visual on Buses	
	Many highlighted the frustration of the lack of progress on piloting an Audio Visual System for buses.	The Department recognises the frustration on this issue and is working with Translink to examine opportunities that exist to make progress on this issue.

ANNEX E

Summary Table of Register Comments

Draft Action Plan Reference	Comment Registered By Consultee
PO1	36
P01A01	11,25,1,24
P01A02	15
P01A03	24
P01A04	35
PO3	21,9,19
P03A01	24,21,15
P03A02	15
P03A03	24
P03A05	33
PO4	37,33,25,13,30,2,26
P04A01	11
PO5	24
P05A04	19
P05A07	1,2
PO6	19,9,30,33,25,37,24,22,28,15
P06A01	13,25,2,17,28
P06A02	35
PO7	24,25,15,20
P07A01	15
PO8	24,2
PO9	24
P09A01	21
PO10	30,13
P10A01	15,28
P10A02	30
P10A03	24
PO12	30,28
P12A01	33
PO13	20,21,36,30,34,19
P13A03	12,13,23,7
P13A05	2,27,32
PO14	6,31,34,37,17,1,32,28
P14A01	15,2,22
P14A02	15,2

Draft Action Plan Reference	Comment Registered By Consultee
P14A03	1,11,31,34,17,12,29,2
P14A04	2,11,31,34,17,12,20
P14A05	1,2
P14A06	7,9
P14A07	15
P14A08	37
P14A09	37
PO15	11,32,19
P15A01	9
P15A02	37
P15A03	37
PO16	30,21,11
PO17	23,30,15
P17A01	15
P17A03	12,17,7
PO18	32,13,37,29
P18A01	11
P18A02	9
PO19	29,11,13,37,19,9
P20A02	25, 1
P20A03	15
PO21	34
P21A02	1
P21A03	21,1
PO22	24
PO23	24
P23A01	24
PO24	19,37,24
P24A01	21
P24A02	13
PO25	21,37,13,27,2
P25A01	21,22
P25A02	23
P25A04	15
P25A07	32,9
PO26	24
P26A01	25
P26A02	1
PO27	24,37,25,34,30
P27A01	37

Draft Action Plan Reference	Comment Registered By Consultee
P27A02	9,4
P27A03	34,28,32
P028	21
P28A01	30
P29A01	19
P29A02	25
P29A09	9
P29A10	15
P030	1,11,21,31
P30A01	7,16,9,13
P30A02	2,7,16,9,13
P30A03	22
P32	22
P32A01	15

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