

Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-12

Monitoring Report

1 April 2007 to 31 March 2012

Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-12

Monitoring Report

1 April 2007 to 31 March 2012

The purpose of the RTS is to support the Regional Development Strategy and to make a significant contribution towards achieving the longer-term transportation vision:

“To have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone’s quality of life.”

This report and related documents are published on the Department’s Internet site: www.drdni.gov.uk/rts.

If this report is not in the format that meets your needs please contact Regional Transportation Unit. We will be pleased to provide printed copies of this document and copies in large print, Braille or audiotape.

You can contact us by writing to us at the address below or by

Email: mary.carnaghan@drdni.gov.uk
Telephone: 028 9054 0610
Fax: 028 9054 0604
Textphone: 028 9054 0642

Mary Carnaghan
Regional Transportation Unit
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB

ISBN: 978-1-904807-48-3

Contents Page

Ministerial Foreword	6
Introduction	7
Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP)	8
Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (RSTN TP)	10
Sub Regional Transport Plan (SRTP)	12
Accessible Transport Strategy	13
Other RTS Transportation-Related Initiatives	14
Equality Monitoring	17
Financing of DRD RTS Transportation Initiatives	17

Ministerial Foreword

As Minister for Regional Development, I am pleased to present this Monitoring Report on the implementation of the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS). This report focuses on progress and key achievements during the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2012.

During this period, progress continued to be made on the implementation of the Belfast Metropolitan, the Regional Strategic Transport Network, Sub Regional Transport Plans and the Accessible Transport Strategy.

My Department has taken forward a number of measures to reform public transport and ensure that the public transport system we have is accessible and operates as efficiently as possible. Through targeting investment in new trains, upgrading the tracks, making improvements to stations, and increasing Park and Ride facilities, passenger journeys on the railway network in Northern Ireland reached over 10 million for the first time two years ago and again last year. My Department also continues to make significant investment in new buses, replacing the old fleet and continues to plan for the innovative Rapid Transit system for Belfast which will deliver a step change in the quality of public transport within the Belfast Metropolitan Area. The Concessionary Fares scheme has also proved extremely successful in providing subsidised transport to a range of people who are at most risk of social exclusion. Whilst not all of the ambitious targets contained in the Belfast Metropolitan Action Plan have been fully met, the progress made can be clearly seen.

My Department is also investing heavily in the Strategic Road Network. Millions of pounds have already been spent on the major road improvement programme connecting ports, improving linkages to communities to ensure the goods we produce can be exported with the greatest of ease. In February of this year, I announced the Executive's, and my commitment, to almost half a billion pounds of road investment across Northern Ireland.

I am pleased that the current Regional Transportation Strategy [2002-12] has been successful in securing record investment in our transport infrastructure and services. However, the speed and direction of change in society prompted the need for a fundamental review. The increase in population and vehicles has placed significant pressures on our transportation networks, coupled with fiscal constraints and the need to reduce our environmental impact. Following completion of this review I published a new document in March 2012; "Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation". The New Approach sets the High Level Aims and Strategic Objectives for transport in Northern Ireland and introduces a new mechanism, a Policy Prioritisation Framework, which will be used to influence our transport investment from 2015 onwards and achieve our vision "to have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life".

Signed by Minister



13 December 2012

Introduction

The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) is being progressed through three Transport Plans; Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP); Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTNTP); Sub Regional Transport Plan (SRTP) and the Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS).

This report monitors progress against the key targets set in the three plans. It also reports on the implementation of the ATS and other significant RTS transportation-related achievements during the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2012.

Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP)

The Department published the BMTP on 13 November 2004. A copy of the full Plan can be obtained on the Internet site www.drdni.gov.uk/rts. The Transport Plan contains a wide range of transportation proposals and has been developed in conjunction with the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan to ensure integration of transport and land use, providing a balanced and sustainable system for the region up to 2015. Progress made on key targets is detailed in Table 1.

There has been solid progress in increasing passenger numbers on the Metro service and especially on the rail network, and also on increasing the percentage of people who travel into the city centre by modes other than private cars. Whilst other ambitious targets such as increasing the number of walking and cycling trips and decreasing the number of personal injury accidents have not fully met their targets set in 2002, there has been an overall improvement throughout the ten year span of the BMTP.

Table 1: BMTP targets

BMTP Target (2015)	Progress at 31 March 2012
1. Morning peak traffic speeds on the BMA's strategic road network – no more than 1% slower than in 2001.	<p>When the 2011 average speed for the BMA Strategic Highway network is compared with that from 2009, the average speed on the BMA Strategic Highway Network in the morning peak (interpreted to be between 07:30-09:15) has fallen by 1.69mph, equating to percentage decrease of 4.81%.</p> <p>By using the average speed on BMA's Strategic Highway Network from 2009 as the base year, the morning traffic speed on BMA's Strategic Highway Network has decreased by 3.81% beyond the target set out in the BMTP</p> <p>Monitoring of this target is difficult given that baseline data for 2001 is only available for 25% of the BMA strategic network.</p>
2. Morning peak bus speeds in the BMA's road network on main radial routes – 15% increase in bus speeds compared to 2001.	<p>Using data obtained from the ACIS Bus Trak system, the bus speeds, as of Oct 2010, have reduced by 12% since 2001. While this is down very slightly on the 2009 bus speeds it is still higher than the 2006 to 2008 speeds.</p> <p>It should be noted that factors such as the availability of long stay parking in the City Centre and increased bus patronage with subsequent increased bus dwell times are influential on bus speeds.</p> <p>The completion of the City Centre Ring Road and the removal of peripheral delays on the edge of the City should assist the introduction of additional bus measures.</p>

3. Car mode share of motorised journeys crossing a Belfast City Centre cordon – reduce to 54% by 2015 compared to 60% in 2001.	In terms of the car, the results show that the car had the highest mode share with 56% of all motorised journeys. Whilst this figure is still 2% above the BMTP target, it should be noted that when compared to 2001 the overall car mode share has decreased by 4%.
4. Number of public transport trips made by bus, rail and rapid transit in the BMA – Morning peak % change from 2001: Bus + 28% and Rail +67%	<p>Bus: Since the introduction of Metro in 2005 there has been a 21.9% growth in passenger numbers.</p> <p>Rail: 73.56% ⁽¹⁾ increase in total passengers 2011/12 vs 2001/02.</p> <p>Rapid Transit: The Department is currently preparing an Outline Business Case for Rapid Transit. Once completed Department of Finance and Personnel and Executive approval to proceed to detailed design and implementation will be sought.</p>
5. Number of walking and cycling trips crossing a Belfast City Centre cordon and the Inner City cordon. Walking +20% for journeys less than 2 miles (by 2012). Cycling +300% from 2000 base.	<p>When compared with the 2009 cordon survey results the number of pedestrian journeys across the Belfast City Centre cordon has increased by 116 people, an increase of 3%. However, when compared to 2005, the results show that the number of pedestrian journeys across the Belfast City Centre Cordon has actually increased by approximately 16%.</p> <p>In terms of cyclists the number of cycling trips across the Belfast City Centre Cordon in the AM peak has continued to increase since 2005 and 2009. In fact the results show that since 2005 the number of cyclists has increased by 50% with a total of 428 cyclists recorded.</p>
6. Number of personal injury accidents (PIAs) on roads in BMA – contribution to the reduction in the number of PIAs by one-third from 2001 by 2012.	<p>Personal Injury Collisions in BMA area.</p> <p>01/02 – 3169</p> <p>10/11 - 3032</p> <p>This represents a 4% reduction from 01/02.</p>
<p>7. Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides from road traffic.</p> <p>8. Emissions of particulates from road traffic.</p> <p>[Targets to be defined as part of Local Air Quality Management Area action plans]</p>	Targets have been defined by Belfast City Council. The Department continues to progress a wide range of initiatives such as Quality Bus Corridors, Park and Ride, new and improved rail stations, rail service frequency, and highway improvements etc. to encourage increased public transport patronage.
9. Access to the public transport system, % of households in the BMA within 10 minutes walk of a bus service – increase relative to 2001.	Latest data available - at 31 March 2007 out of a total of 269,255 residential point addresses, 97.2% are within 800m which is a reasonable approximation to target of within 10 minutes walk of a bus service.

⁽¹⁾ Percentage is based on total passenger number increase which is taken as proxy for peak hour passenger number increase.

Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (RSTN TP)

The Department published the RSTNTP on 21 March 2005. A copy of the full plan can be obtained on the Internet site: http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/transport_planning/tp-transport_plans.htm. The RSTN TP includes proposals across 4 modes of transport namely Rail, Walk/Cycle, Bus and Highways. Progress made on the RSTNTP key targets is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 – RSTNTP Targets

RSTNTP Targets (2015)	Progress at 31 March 2012
1. Achieve at least 2% increase over speeds in 2001 [measured during the AM peak (07.00 – 09.00)]	<p>As 2001 information is not available the 2003 information is used as the base year.</p> <p>The 2011 Journey Time surveys indicate that the average speed on the KTCs has increased from 43.12mph during the AM peak in 2003 to 46.54mph during the AM peak in 2011. This equates to an overall percentage increase of 7.93% which is well above the target</p> <p>Analysis of the draft 2011 RSTN journey time data reveals that the 2011 AM peak hour traffic speeds on Key Transport corridors are similar (decrease of 1%) to the 2001 baseline approximation.</p> <p>Improvements to traffic speeds are closely linked to major road improvements and in particular the removal of bottlenecks. Many of the schemes planned will not be delivered until later in the plan period as they have long lead in times associated with statutory processes.</p>
2. Construction of Strategic Road improvements. Complete the following major road improvements: 16 Bypasses/Link Roads 78 kilometres of dual carriageway 40 kilometres of widened single carriageway 11 major junction improvements	<p>The figures for completed schemes up to 31 March 2012 are:</p> <p>13 Bypasses/Link Roads 65.1km of dual carriageway 24.2km of single carriageway 13 major junction improvements.</p>

RSTNTP Targets (2015)	Progress at 31 March 2012
<p>3. Number of trips made by rail. Morning peak % change from 2001.</p> <p>Rail (RTS target) +60% [Total annual figure with the exception of Enterprise services]</p> <p>Rail (within BMA) + 67%</p>	<p>73.56% ⁽²⁾ increase in total passengers 2011/12 vs 2001/02.</p>
<p>4. Number of highway accidents/fatalities on the RSTN. Contribution to long-term road casualty targets [as defined in the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy 2002-12</p>	<p>Fatal Personal Injury Collisions. 01/02-----54 (resulting in 61 fatalities) 08/09.....24 (resulting in 26 fatalities) 09/10-----21 (resulting in 26 fatalities)</p> <p>This constitutes a 56% reduction from 2001/02 to 2009/10.</p> <p>Personal Injury Collisions. 01/02-----1657 08/09.....1232 09/10-----1153 This constitutes a 27% reduction from 2001/02</p>
<p>5. Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides, Carbon Dioxide and other particles from road traffic. Targets to be defined as per Local Air Quality Management Area Action Plans (LAQMAs)</p>	<p>The percentage of the Inter-urban Bus and Coach fleet that was accessibility compliant was 91%.</p>
<p>6. Accessibility of vehicles. 100% of vehicles operating on the inter-urban network to meet the requirements of the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations</p>	<p>The percentage of the Inter-urban Bus and Coach fleet that was accessibility compliant was 91%.</p>
<p>7. Average vehicle age of no more than 8 years – in addition no bus older than 18 years or coach older than 12 years</p>	<p>As at 31 March 2012 the average age of the fleet providing inter-urban services was 6.6 years with 2 buses being over the age of 18 ⁽³⁾ and 7 coaches over the age of 12.</p>

⁽²⁾ Percentage is based on total passenger number increase which is taken as proxy for peak hour passenger number increase.

⁽³⁾ 'Q' type Volvo Tigers retained to operate a service which travels via a bridge which has a specific weight restriction, with which these vehicles are compliant.

Sub Regional Transport Plan (SRTP)

The Department launched the SRTP on 11 June 2007. A copy of the full plan can be obtained on the Internet site www.drdni.gov.uk/rts. The SRTP deals with the transport needs of the whole of Northern Ireland with the exception of the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA) and the rail and trunk road networks, which are covered in earlier Transport Network Plans.

In line with the Regional Transportation Strategy, the SRTP notes the highway linkages with the Regional Strategic Transport Network and identifies separate packages of measures for the period 2002-2015 by mode of transport. Progress made on the SRTP key targets is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3 – SRTP Targets

SRTP Targets (2015)	Progress at 31 March 2012
1. Contribute to and, where possible demonstrate progress towards the achievement of long term road casualty reduction targets set in the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy.	Killed/Seriously Injured: from a recorded level of 1204 in 2001 to 884 in 2010 constitutes a 27% reduction. Children Killed/Seriously Injured: from a recorded level of 148 in 2001 to 93 in 2011 constitutes a 37% reduction.
2. Cycling trips to increase in line with the Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy – significant progress towards the target of quadrupling trips by 2015 [from 2000 levels].	In Northern Ireland the average cycling flows over the period 2000-10 increased by 79%. <i>Source Annual Cycle Usage Report for NI 2000-10.</i>
3. Walking trips to increase in line with the action plan for walking in Northern Ireland.	87 short walking journeys [less than 1 mile] were taken per person per year in Northern Ireland during 2009-11. People living outside BMA took on average 79 short walking journeys per person per year. <i>Source Travel Survey Northern Ireland 2009-11</i>
4. New public transport services to serve isolated communities and mobility impaired residents in the rural areas across Northern Ireland.	Public transport services in rural areas by Translink continue to be supported from the Rural Transport Fund. Support is also provided to a number of rural Community Transport Partnerships who provide Dial-a-Lift services for their members who wish to access local services. Translink, the Partnerships and DRD work closely to identify where service can and should be integrated and work continues in this area and will be taken forward under Public transport reform.

Accessible Transport Strategy

In April 2005 the Department for Regional Development published an Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) for Northern Ireland. The ATS aims to address the barriers that prevent older people and people with disabilities from using the transport system. A full copy of the ATS can be found on the web site www.drdni.gov.uk/ats.

Action Plans have been produced to implement the ATS. The most recent draft action plan covering the period 2012-15 includes details of progress to date and can also be found on the web site www.drdni.gov.uk/ats. Consultation on this draft ATS Action Plan ended on 12 April 2012. The responses to the consultation are being considered and the Action Plan will be published later in 2012.

There have been notable achievements in meeting the ATS aims during the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2012. All Translink bus and train stations have been upgraded and refurbished to comply with DDA Accessibility regulations. Notable improvements have been undertaken in Newry, Portadown, Antrim and Ballymoney. Other schemes to improve transport accessibility include:

Ulsterbus Project

This project aimed to make reasonable adjustments to any physical feature on Ulsterbus property which inhibited disabled people gaining access to the service Translink provide. Various works have been carried out at 19 Ulsterbus stations. This included work

on steps, exterior surfaces, parking areas, building entrances and exits, doors, toilet facilities, public facilities (telephones, service desks etc.), lighting, signage, and lifts.

Newry Train Station

Translink opened the newly built Newry train station on 7 September 2009. The new station has significantly improved facilities for all passengers and is wholly DDA compliant. The key improvements to the station's accessibility include, a heated passenger waiting area with comfortable seating; a 300 space Park and Ride facility with 14 disabled bays; lifts to platforms; a platform canopy; electronic passenger information; an enclosed link bridge between platforms and fully accessible toilet facilities.

Portadown Train Station

Work is currently underway to modernise the current facilities at Portadown Train Station to make it fully accessible for all. The work, commenced on 16 April 2012, is expected to take 18 months to complete. The refurbishment features will include:

- Redesign and modernisation of the current passenger waiting facilities
- New lift access from the Obins Street entrance
- New lifts installed, improving access between all train platforms
- New automatic doors throughout the station

Ballymoney Bridge

The new railway bridge in Ballymoney to improve access between the town centre and the Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre was completed in 2012. The bridge ensures DDA compliance and also means that train platforms are fully accessible for all. A new Park and Ride facility containing 60 parking spaces, including bays for Blue Badge Holders, has also been created.

Antrim Bus and Rail Centre

Construction work on Antrim's integrated bus and rail centre is now underway. This major station development project will transform bus and rail facilities in the area. It will deliver a first class modern transport hub and will be Northern Ireland's first sustainable bus and rail centre

Investment in Translink Fleet

The Department has invested considerably in recent years to upgrade the Translink fleet. This investment has offered improved access for many older and disabled people to the network with around 91% of the Ulsterbus fleet and 100% of the Metro fleet now being wheelchair accessible compared to only 54% and 93% in 2007 for Ulsterbus and Metro respectively.

New Services and Concessionary Fares Scheme

The introduction of new services such as Door-2-Door and improvements to rural transport has enhanced access for older and disabled people in urban and rural areas. These schemes coupled with the introduction of the Concessionary Fares Scheme has led to over 12 Million journeys being made on the bus and rail network in 2011 by older and disabled people.

The Concessionary Fares Scheme, which provides free bus and rail travel anytime of the day to anywhere in Northern Ireland, was extended to people aged 60+ in 2008. By removing this financial barrier the extended scheme has helped some people with reduced mobility to access public transport.

Accessing Information about Transport in Northern Ireland

The Department continues to improve the range of information available about the transport network. This includes providing information in a range of accessible formats including Braille, audio CD and easyread formats. In 2010 the Department launched a "Travel Safe Guide" for people with learning disabilities which provide information on how to stay safe when out and about and how to use the transport network.

Other RTS Transportation-Related Initiatives

Detailed progress reports on RTS transportation-related initiatives being taken forward by the Department and other government departments can be found on the web site www.drdni.gov.uk/rts. Significant achievements during 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2012 are noted below.

- **All Ireland Free Travel Scheme** – in April 2007 the Department, in partnership with the Department of Social and Family Affairs in Dublin, launched the All-Ireland Free Travel Scheme. This scheme allows older people to travel free-of-charge on public transport throughout the island of Ireland and hence encourages a greater exchange between residents North and South.

• Door-to-Door Transport Services –

during 2007-08 these services were rolled out to 29 urban areas throughout Northern Ireland. These services are aimed at those people who, through disability, find it difficult or impossible to use conventional public transport.

• M1/Westlink – the £104 million upgrade of the M1/Westlink was completed in 2009. This upgrade benefits all road users – public transport, the haulage industry and private car users. The Broadway underpass was the most significant milestone of this complex project and was opened to traffic on 4 July 2008, some 13 months ahead of schedule and the £20 million M2 widening scheme from Sandyknowes to Greencastle, was opened on 9 June 2009 two months ahead of schedule.

• Highway Network – Preliminary works have commenced on the 14 kilometres of the A8 between Ballyclare and Larne. This will complete a minimum of dual carriageway standard on the Eastern Seaboard corridor, thus reducing journey times, improving safety and supporting the continued development of the Port of Larne, our second largest port. Funding in the current budget period has also been committed to constructing the two stretches of the A5 Western Transport Corridor dual carriageway project, from New Buildings, Londonderry, to north of Strabane and from south of Omagh to Ballygawley. Another significant project is the dualling of the A2 Shore Road at Greenisland which will improve access to Belfast.

• New Trains – a further 20 new trains were manufactured and delivered during 2011 and 2012, comprising thirteen replacements for rolling stock which were life expired and 7 additional trains used to increase capacity and frequency and to improve services on the rail network. The first of these ultra modern trains entered into passenger service in September 2011, offering the public a high standard of performance, comfort, safety and accessibility.

• Freight – recognising the common challenges for freight in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, an All Island Freight Forum was established in 2009 by the Department for Regional Development and the Irish Department of Transport. The Forum has worked with key stakeholders on a number of areas under the themes of sustainability, competitiveness, and connectivity.

• Active Travel Strategy – is the result of the work undertaken by the inter-departmental Active Travel Forum and is currently awaiting Executive approval. The Strategy draws on the Report of the Forum which was published for public consultation on 15 December 2011. The draft Strategy set out targets to increase by 2020 the average distances walked and cycled and the percentage of total trips taken by cycling to be in line with levels experienced in the rest of the United Kingdom. Following Executive approval an Action Plan will be developed to coordinate delivery of the Active Travel Strategy over a period up to 2015.

• **Belfast Rapid Transit [BRT]** – the legislation required to allow the Department to implement and operate BRT was included in the Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. A public consultation and equality impact assessment [EQIA] has been carried out on the route options for BRT; consultation report and EQIA are on web site: <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/rapid-transit/rapid-transit-publications.htm>. The Department is currently preparing an Outline Business Case which will identify the preferred options for BRT in terms of the network routes, procurement strategy, commercial/business model and fare system.

• **Belfast on the Move** – a traffic masterplan for Belfast city centre entitled “Belfast on the Move” was launched in September 2010. It aims to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use to and in Belfast city centre. The current phase of the works known as the Sustainable Transport Enabling Measures include:

- The re-routing of northbound through traffic from Great Victoria Street onto Hope Street and Durham Street with south bound traffic continuing to use Great Victoria Street. Grosvenor Road will become one-way westbound and College Square North one-way eastbound;

- The redistribution of existing road space in city centre streets to provide extensive bus priority measures for use by public transport, taxis and cyclists; and

- The delivery of 20 new controlled pedestrian crossing points; about 2.6km of new bus lanes which will also accommodate cyclists and taxis; 340m of new dedicated service bays; 1km of new dedicated cycle lanes; and over 40 additional dedicated disabled parking bays.

Work is ongoing at a number of locations in the city centre and the Sustainable Transport Enabling Measures project is due to be completed in summer 2013.

• **Park and Ride** – A strategic review of Park and Ride has been carried out by the Department. A Report, published in August 2011, which sets out the findings and conclusions of this review can be found at <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=7428>. In 2004 the Park and Ride capacity was 2323 spaces and in 2011 it was 5136. An assessment of which Park and Ride projects can be taken forward in the next three years, dependent on planning issues and finance is ongoing. Major projects being assessed include Dundonald, Ballymartin, McKinsty Road and Sprucefield.

• **Electric Car [ecar]** – the ecar initiative to bring electric vehicle infrastructure to Northern Ireland was launched in March 2012. Over 40 public standard charge-points are now available in Belfast, Londonderry, Newry, Armagh, Enniskillen and Larne. Three special rapid chargers have also been introduced close to major roads. In 2012 -13 a further 120 standard and 5+ rapid charge points will be installed.

• **Active Travel Demonstration Projects** – In 2012 Belfast City Council, Craigavon Borough Council, Derry City Council and Strabane District Council successfully bid for substantial funding for Active Travel Demonstration projects. This investment in sustainable transport measures, walking, cycling, car sharing helps save the environment, helps reduce our carbon emissions and creates sustainable means of transport.

Equality Monitoring

The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) is being delivered through three transport plans and the Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS). An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been published for each plan and for the ATS. All four EQIAs concluded that implementation of the transport plans and the ATS would provide benefits across the equality categories by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The ATS contains an Action Plan that will be reviewed biennially and a new Action Plan will be published later in 2012. The Department will work in conjunction with the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee to determine the equality impacts of the ATS as part of the review process.

A review of the RTS has been completed and a new approach to regional transportation, which was subject to public consultation, was published in March 2012; see page 23 for further details. As the New Approach was developed a full EQIA was undertaken and showed positive impacts for all groups with no negative impacts identified. The Department will publish biennial monitoring reports as the new approach is used to guide decisions on strategic transportation interventions beyond 2015.

These EQIAs can be viewed on the Department's internet site www.drdni.gov.uk/rts.

Financing of DRD RTS Initiatives

The RTS has been successful in securing high levels of public funding to improve our transportation infrastructure; a table detailing RTS costs of initiatives by mode to 31 March 2012 can be found on the website www.drdni.gov.uk/rts under "Annual Reports".

However, the speed and direction of change in society prompted the need for a fundamental review. The increase in population and vehicles has placed significant pressures on our transportation networks, coupled with fiscal constraints and the need to reduce our environmental impact.

The review has been completed and a new approach to regional transportation, which was subject to public consultation, was published in March 2012. The document, "Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Transportation" can be found on the web site www.drdni.gov.uk/rts.

The New Approach sets out the High Level Aims and Strategic Objectives for transportation in Northern Ireland and introduces a new mechanism, a Policy Prioritisation Framework, to help us reach better decisions on investment by identifying those schemes which will best achieve our objectives. The existing Transport Plans [BMTP, RSTNTP and SRTP] will continue to be implemented until their planned expiry in 2015 and the New Approach will then be used to influence our transportation investment from 2015 onwards.

The Department is currently developing the Policy Prioritisation Framework in liaison with key stakeholders. This Framework will then be used to help prepare a new Delivery Plan for transport linked to the 2015 budget.

Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS)
for Northern Ireland 2002-12

Monitoring Report