



Planning Policy  
Statement 3  
(PPS 3 Revised Feb 2005)

Access, Movement  
and Parking



An Agency within the Department of the

**Environment**

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# Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3 Revised Feb 2005)

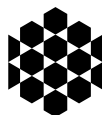
## Access, Movement and Parking

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out the policies of the Department of the Environment on particular aspects of land-use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents will be taken into account in preparing development plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

This PPS sets out the Department's planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking. It forms an important element in the integration of transport and land use planning. It embodies the Government's commitments to the provision of a modern, safe, sustainable transport system, the improvement of mobility for those who are socially excluded or whose mobility is impaired, the promotion of healthier living and improved road safety.

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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

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## Preamble

The Department of the Environment is responsible for planning control in Northern Ireland. The Planning Service, an Agency within the Department, administers its planning functions.

The Department has a statutory duty, laid down in Article 3 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 to formulate and co-ordinate policy for securing the orderly and consistent development of land and the planning of that development. The Department is required to ensure that such policy is in general conformity with the Regional Development Strategy.

The Department's planning policies are normally issued through Planning Policy Statements and PPS 1 'General Principles' advises that:

*"Planning Policy Statements set out the policies of the Department on particular aspects of land-use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents will be taken into account in preparing development plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals."*

This Planning Policy Statement, PPS 3 (Revised) Access, Movement and Parking sets out the Department's planning policies for vehicular and pedestrian access, transport assessment, the protection of transport routes and parking. It forms an important element in the integration of transport and land use planning. It embodies the Government's commitments to the provision of a modern, safe, sustainable transport system, the improvement of mobility for those who are socially excluded or whose mobility is impaired, the promotion of healthier living and improved road safety.

The PPS has been prepared in close consultation with the Department for Regional Development and needs to be considered together with **PPS 13 Transportation and Land Use** and the recently published draft guidelines produced by both Departments on Transport Assessment.

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**The PPS replaces PPS 3 Development Control: Roads Considerations published May 1996 and supersedes the following provisions of the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland:**

- **PSU 4 Access, Layout, Servicing and Parking**
- **PSU 5 Main Traffic Routes**
- **PSU 7 People with Disabilities**
- **DES 2 Townscape – insofar as it applies to Access for the Disabled**

**Where the above policies are referred to elsewhere in the Planning Strategy, the policies of this statement take precedence.**

**The layout of internal accesses and parking provision associated with new residential developments will continue to be assessed under the provisions of PPS 7 ‘Quality Residential Environments’ and associated supplementary planning guidance.**

The PPS has been subject to an equality impact screening exercise in line with the statutory obligation contained in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The outcome of this exercise indicates that the PPS is unlikely to have any significant adverse implications for equality of opportunity or community relations.

Nothing in this document should be read as a commitment that public resources will be provided for any specific project. All proposals for expenditure will be subject to economic appraisal and other relevant assessments and will also have to be considered having regard to the overall availability of resources.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Good mobility and accessibility for both people and goods is essential for the continued future growth of Northern Ireland and the improvement of opportunity for people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired.
- 1.2 The road network is the 'artery' for both the economic and social life of the Region. Commercial vehicles, cars, bus and coach services, taxis and motorcycles all rely on the network and it also provides the main infrastructure base for the movement of pedestrians and cyclists. Recent investment in the rail network acknowledges the important role this too can play in meeting the region's long-term transportation needs.
- 1.3 It is government policy that there should be greater integration of transportation and land use planning by:
  - promoting more sustainable transport choices;
  - promoting greater accessibility for all; and
  - reducing the need to travel, especially by the private car.
- 1.4 Development should be planned to take account of accessibility by all transport modes and the need to mitigate adverse transport impacts and promote road safety. This will assist with the promotion of healthier living and help reduce social exclusion.
- 1.5 New development should not therefore be located and designed on the assumption that the car represents the only realistic means of access for the vast majority of people. Choice of access is important for everyone, especially those whose mobility is impaired and those people who do not have regular use of a car.
- 1.6 A major influence on our choice of means of transport is the availability of car parking. With increasing levels of congestion and the need to promote sustainable transport choices it may be necessary to introduce parking restraint in certain locations.

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## 2.0 Policy Context

### Transportation and Land Use

- 2.1 The Department for Regional Development has prepared PPS 13, Transportation and Land Use. This advises on the wider transportation policy context affecting the Region and provides strategic policy guidance and advice relating to the integration of transportation and land use. The need for this integration is a key objective in delivering the transportation vision of the Regional Development Strategy which is shared with the Regional Transportation Strategy:
- “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”.***

### The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy 2002-2012

- 2.2 Road safety is a key priority for government throughout the United Kingdom. The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy 2002-2012 published in November 2002 seeks to promote an integrated approach to the planning, co-ordination and delivery of the Government’s road safety activities over the next decade. It represents the commitment of departments and agencies in Northern Ireland whose activities contribute to road casualty reduction.
- 2.3 The Strategy sets out the strategic objectives which are proposed to improve road safety over the next decade. Importantly for PPS 3 these include the improvement of road safety for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users and ensuring that safety continues to be a primary objective in designing, building, operating and maintaining roads in Northern Ireland.

## **Other Government Strategies**

- 2.4 In formulating the policies contained in this Statement, consideration has also been given to a number of other Government strategies, in particular the Department's Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance and 'Investing for Health' published by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.



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## 3.0 Policy Objectives

3.1 The main objectives of this Statement are to:

- promote road safety, in particular, for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users;
- restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes;
- make efficient use of road space within the context of promoting modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport;
- ensure that new development offers a realistic choice of access by walking, cycling and public transport, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas;
- ensure the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired, are taken into account in relation to accessibility to buildings and parking provision;
- promote the provision of adequate facilities for cyclists in new development;
- promote parking policies that will assist in reducing reliance on the private car and help tackle growing congestion; and
- protect routes required for new transport schemes including disused transport routes with potential for future reuse.

## 4.0 Development Plans

### Introduction

- 4.1 Development plans have a key role to play in facilitating the integration of transportation and land use planning. Their preparation provides the opportunity to assess the transport needs and problems within the plan area and to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to transportation matters in the allocation of land for future development. Further information on the integration of transportation and land use planning is provided in PPS 13.
- 4.2 In association with the preparation of a development plan a transport study will be carried out by or on behalf of DRD Roads Service. The study will assess the capacity and quality of the overall transport network and the transportation needs of the plan area and will help inform the process of identifying land to meet the various development needs. The study will also include an assessment of existing parking and travel patterns in town centres and other locations where demand is generated.
- 4.3 As part of a transport study an accessibility analysis will normally be carried out. This process involves measuring the ease of travel from or to specific origins or destinations to provide an evaluation of the travel opportunities available to connect people from where they are to where they want to go. Further advice on accessibility analysis is provided in PPS 13.
- 4.4 Development plans will deal with the land use implications arising out of the transport study. Other transportation initiatives will be taken forward by the Department for Regional Development through the Regional Transportation Strategy and the supporting framework of transport plans. The development plan will therefore normally focus on the following matters:

- Land Use Allocations and Associated Transport Infrastructure;
- New Transport Schemes, Walking and Cycling;
- Disused Transport Routes;
- Parking Restraint;
- Car Parks; and
- Protected Routes.

4.5 The role of the development plan in facilitating a move to more sustainable transport modes will primarily be met through the protection of routes and sites required for new schemes and the identification of walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure required as an integral element of the development of zoned land.

### **Land Use Allocations and Associated Transport Infrastructure**

4.6 A key planning objective is to ensure that new development offers a realistic choice of access by walking, cycling and public transport, whilst accommodating responsible use of the private car. The allocation of land for various uses in a development plan will therefore need to take into account the overall aims of transportation policy and matters flowing from the transport study, such as accessibility analysis. Sites in larger urban areas highlighted by this process as being highly accessible by a variety of modes of transport may be identified as suitable locations for higher density and mixed-use development.

4.7 Development Plans, through key site requirements, will set out the main transport infrastructure which developers will be expected to provide for land allocations and specific zoned sites. These will seek to promote sustainable transport choices and may include matters such as public transport provision, walking and cycling infrastructure, necessary roads infrastructure, site access, and phasing of development. It should be noted, however, that the need for supporting infrastructure works and / or mitigation measures necessary to facilitate the specific scale and form of proposed development may only be identified at the planning

application stage. For example, as a result of an Environmental Impact Assessment, a Transport Assessment or as part of the normal consultation process.

### **New Transport Schemes, Walking and Cycling**

- 4.8 New transport schemes include major proposals for road, rail and public transport provision, as well as proposals to aid modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport e.g. park and ride or park and share facilities and improvements to public transport services and the pedestrian and cycle network.
- 4.9 The RTS and the supporting framework of transport plans will identify and prioritise future transport schemes. The transport plan / study will provide locational detail for such schemes and land required to facilitate their implementation will then be identified and protected in the appropriate development plan. This will include protection of routes and sites for transport infrastructure schemes beyond the development plan period where these are of strategic importance.

### **Disused Transport Routes**

- 4.10 Development plans will identify and protect disused transport routes, including any associated facilities, where proposals exist for their re-use for transportation, recreation or leisure purposes. The plan will also identify and protect disused routes of strategic importance highlighted in the transport study as offering potential in the longer term for future transport use.

### **Parking Restraint**

- 4.11 As part of an overall parking strategy, development plans may designate areas of parking restraint within which a reduction from published car parking standards will be applied. It is unlikely in the short term that such areas will be brought forward in settlements of less than 10,000 population. In larger settlements several zones with varying levels of reduction may be identified to reflect their differing characteristics and levels of accessibility.

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## **Car Parks**

- 4.12 Where appropriate, development plans, in conjunction with the Department for Regional Development, will identify existing and proposed town centre car parks and may bring forward local policies as part of an overall parking strategy. Park and Ride and Park and Share sites are considered under paragraph 4.8.

## **Protected Routes**

- 4.13 Annex B contains an up to date map identifying the existing roads throughout Northern Ireland established as Protected Routes. Development plans will list the Protected Routes in the plan area and indicate these on the plan maps for information purposes. Where appropriate, development plans will identify and prepare local policies for those stretches of a Protected Route to be subjected to further access restrictions beyond those set out in Policy AMP 3 of this Statement, for instance due to a history of traffic collisions, high volumes of traffic or speed of vehicles.

## **5.0 Planning Policies**

**In exercise of its responsibility for planning control in Northern Ireland the Department assesses development proposals against all planning policies and other material considerations that are relevant to it.**

**The planning policies of this Statement must therefore be read together and in conjunction with the relevant contents of the Department's development plans and other planning policy publications, including the Regional Development Strategy. The Department will also have regard to the contents of published supplementary planning guidance documents.**

**The following policies set out the main planning considerations that the Department will take into account in assessing: the provision made for access, movement and parking in proposals for new development; proposals for car parks; and proposals which affect routes afforded protection for future transport proposals. The provisions of these policies will prevail unless there are other overriding policy or material considerations which outweigh them and justify a contrary decision.**

## **Policy AMP 1 Creating an Accessible Environment**

The Department's aim is to create a more accessible environment for everyone. Accordingly developers should take account of the specific needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired in the design of new development.

Where appropriate, the external layout of development will be required to incorporate all or some of the following:

- facilities to aid accessibility e.g. provision of dropped kerbs and tactile paving etc, together with the removal of any unnecessary obstructions;
- convenient movement along pathways and an unhindered approach to buildings;
- pedestrian priority to facilitate pedestrian movement within and between land uses; and
- ease of access to reserved car parking, public transport facilities and taxi ranks.

The development of a new building open to the public, or to be used for employment or education purposes, will only be permitted where it is designed to provide suitable access for all, whether as customers, visitors or employees. In such cases the Department will operate a presumption in favour of a level approach from the boundary of the site to the building entrance and the use of steps, ramps or mechanical aids will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that these are necessary.

The Department will also seek to ensure that access to existing buildings and their surroundings is improved as opportunities arise through alterations, extensions and changes of use.

The Department may require the submission of an Access Statement to accompany development proposals.

## **Justification and Amplification**

- 5.1 The Department is committed to improving opportunities for the mobility of those who are socially excluded and in greatest need. The changing state of our built environment - whether by new development, redevelopment or the upgrading and refurbishment of existing buildings - provides an opportunity to secure a more accessible environment for everyone. In assessing development proposals the Department will therefore seek to facilitate improved accessibility for all people, and in particular will require that the specific needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired be addressed.
- 5.2 The needs of disabled people are explicitly recognised in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). This legislation has introduced measures to make it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people and with the introduction of the final phase of the Act<sup>1</sup> service providers are now obliged to make 'reasonable adjustments' to remove or overcome physical barriers to access<sup>2</sup>.
- 5.3 The integration of good accessibility in all aspects of design will benefit everyone in society through a better thought out, easier and more accessible environment<sup>3</sup> and the matter should be considered at an early stage in the design process. The quality of such access is just as important as its availability. For example suitable access should be provided for all through the main entrance of a building to ensure that everyone's dignity is respected.

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<sup>1</sup> On 1st October 2004 the final phase of the Disability Discrimination Act – Part III became law.

<sup>2</sup> Further advice on this matter is set out in the DDA Code of Practice 'Rights of Access Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises' produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and which is available at [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

<sup>3</sup> See the Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) at [www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk) for design advice. CAE is an information provider on how the built environment can best be made or modified to achieve inclusion by design.



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- 5.4 There is also a need to ensure that special attention is paid to areas outside buildings. The siting of buildings and the layout of associated car parking, vehicular access and circulation roads can often act as a barrier to convenient movement. Development should therefore be designed to facilitate ease of access for all pedestrians and wheelchair users, not only to the building entrance but also from the pedestrian environment, streets and spaces around buildings and where necessary should provide for priority for such movement over vehicles.
- 5.5 The designer of a new building should seek as far as possible to meet the Department's presumption of providing a level approach from site boundary to the building entrance. The detailed design features for access into the building, such as a level threshold, remains a matter for consideration under the Building Regulations.
- 5.6 It is recognised that many existing buildings were not designed with disabled people in mind. Accordingly it may not always be possible for development involving the alteration or change of use of an existing building which is open to the public to provide level access. In such cases there will be a presumption that suitable access for all should be incorporated as far as reasonably possible. Designing suitable access in these circumstances may call for imagination and creativity.
- 5.7 In the case of historic or listed buildings, if a flexible and pragmatic approach is taken, it should often be possible to plan suitable access for all without compromising the building's special interest or character.

### *Access Statements*

- 5.8 Where appropriate, the Department may require the submission of an Access Statement to accompany a development proposal for a buildings open to the public, or to be used for employment or education purposes. The preparation of such a statement can help create buildings and places which are accessible and inclusive.

- 5.9 Where an Access Statement is required to accompany a planning application it should identify:
- The philosophy and approach to inclusive design;
  - The key issues of the particular scheme; and
  - The sources of advice and guidance used.
- 5.10 In the case of existing buildings, particularly historic buildings, such a statement would enable a designer / developer to identify the constraints posed by the existing structure and its immediate environment and to explain how these have been overcome.
- 5.11 Further information on designing for a more accessible environment is set out in the Department's guide 'Access for All'.

## **Policy AMP 2 Access to Public Roads**

Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal involving direct access, or the intensification of the use of an existing access, onto a public road where:

- a) such access will not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic; and
- b) the proposal does not conflict with Policy AMP 3 Access to Protected Routes.

The acceptability of access arrangements, including the number of access points onto the public road, will be assessed against the Departments published guidance. Consideration will also be given to the following factors:

- the nature and scale of the development;
- the character of existing development;
- the contribution of the proposal to the creation of a quality environment, including the potential for urban / village regeneration and environmental improvement;
- the location and number of existing accesses; and
- the standard of the existing road network together with the speed and volume of traffic using the adjacent public road and any expected increase.

### **Justification and Amplification**

5.12 The planning system has an important role to play in promoting road safety and ensuring the efficient use of the public road network. New development will often affect the public road

network surrounding it, and it is part of the function of planning control to seek to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts. In assessing development proposals the Department will therefore seek to ensure that access arrangements for development proposals are safe and will not unduly interfere with the movement of traffic. In addition the Department considers it essential to restrict access to Protected Routes in order to facilitate the efficient and safe movement of traffic over long distances (see Policy AMP 3 Access to Protected Routes).

### *New Access*

- 5.13 New development will generally require vehicular access<sup>4</sup> to a public road, either in the form of a new access or by the use of an existing one. A properly located and well-designed access is essential for the safety and convenience of all road users – those proceeding on the public road, including cyclists and pedestrians, as well as those using the access.
- 5.14 The proximity of the proposed access to junctions, other existing accesses and the total number of accesses onto a given stretch of road are relevant matters in the assessment of traffic hazards. The combining of individual access points along a road will be encouraged as this can help to improve road safety.
- 5.15 Whatever the type of access, good visibility is also essential for the safety and convenience of all road users. The Department will expect applicants to have control over the land required to provide the requisite visibility splays and ensure that they are retained free of any obstruction. A condition will normally be imposed requiring that no development shall take place until the works required to provide access, including visibility splays, have been carried out.

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<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of the policies in this PPS, a field gate is not an access.

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- 5.16 Development Control Advice Note 15 'Vehicular Access Standards'<sup>5</sup> sets out the current standards for sightlines, radii, gradient etc. that will be applied to both new access and intensified use of an existing vehicular access onto existing public roads. DCAN 15 also includes guidance on special requirements for access onto a Trunk Road. The current standards for access within new residential developments are set out in the 'Creating Places' design guide<sup>6</sup>.
- 5.17 It is recognised that it may not always be practicable to comply fully with the appropriate visibility standards. Such standards, like all material considerations, need to be assessed in light of the particular circumstances of the individual case. Exceptionally a relaxation in standards may be acceptable in order to secure other important planning objectives. Visibility standards, however, will not be reduced to such a level that danger is likely to be caused.

#### *Use of an Existing Access*

- 5.18 In circumstances where an existing access is available to facilitate development proposals, the Department will generally expect this to be used, unless there is an opportunity to provide a more acceptable access arrangement, having regard to both road safety and local amenity considerations. Where an existing access is to be used, but is sub-standard, a condition requiring its improvement prior to the commencement of the development will normally be imposed on a grant of planning permission. In cases where a new access is considered acceptable in preference to the intensified use of an existing access a condition requiring the existing access to be closed may be imposed.

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<sup>5</sup> Development Control Advice Note 15 'Vehicular Access Standards', 2nd Edition, August 1999.

<sup>6</sup> 'Creating Places: Achieving Quality in Residential Developments', DOE/DRD, May 2000.

### *Access for Rural Replacement Dwellings*

- 5.19 In relation to development proposals for a replacement dwelling<sup>7</sup> in the countryside, where an existing access is available but this does not meet the current standards, the Department would encourage applicants to consider the potential for incorporating improvements to the access in the interests of road safety.

### *Access Within Settlement Limits*

- 5.20 One of the key themes that underlies the Department's approach to planning is quality development, in particular, the need to secure a higher level of design, layout and landscaping for residential development. Planning Policy Statement 7 'Quality Residential Environments' recognises that the design of many housing developments in recent years has tended to be dominated by roads considerations. Properties have often backed onto nearby roads or other public areas and created unsightly views. This has, in part, resulted from the practice of minimising the number of access points onto the public road.
- 5.21 Minimising access onto the public road needs to be balanced with the greater emphasis now placed on the overall quality of design and sustainability of development. The residential design guide 'Creating Places' advocates the creation of permeable layouts with an interconnected network of carriageways and a number of access points. This will not only help improve quality, but it can also enhance safety by ensuring that vehicle flows are well distributed and low in most places by creating the shortest practicable routes to destinations. It will also provide alternative means of access for the emergency services.

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<sup>7</sup> Proposals for replacement dwellings in the countryside are currently assessed against Policy HOU 13 of the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland.

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- 5.22 Accordingly the Department considers that greater attention should in future be given to the potential adverse impact that minimising the number of vehicular accesses on to the public road can have on the visual and environmental qualities of a development scheme.

### *Access for Emergency Services*

- 5.23 The suitability of access arrangements for the fire service and ambulance service can be an important consideration in the layout and design of development, particularly in relation to backland development or sites with restricted access. Designers should therefore consider the needs of the emergency services early in the design process and may be required to submit information to accompany their proposals indicating how the matter has been addressed.

## **Policy AMP 3 Access to Protected Routes**

The Department will restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto Protected Routes as follows:

### **Motorways – All locations**

Planning permission will not be granted for development proposals involving direct access. An exception may be considered in the case of motorway service areas.

### **Protected Routes Designed to an Appropriate Standard as Dual Carriageways, Ring Roads, Through-Passes and By-Passes – All locations**

Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal involving direct access or the intensification of the use of an existing access in exceptional circumstances or where the proposal is of regional significance.

### **Other Protected Routes – Outside Settlement Limits**

Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal involving direct access, or the intensification of the use of an existing access in the following cases:

- (a) A Replacement Dwelling – where a building to be replaced would meet the criteria for development within a Green Belt or Countryside Policy Area and there is an existing vehicular access onto the Protected Route.
- (b) A Farm Dwelling – where a farm dwelling, including a farm retirement dwelling, would meet the criteria for development within a Green Belt or Countryside Policy Area and access cannot reasonably be obtained from an adjacent minor road.
- (c) A Dwelling Serving an Established Commercial or Industrial Enterprise – where a dwelling would meet the criteria for development within a Green Belt or Countryside Policy Area and access cannot reasonably be obtained from an adjacent minor road.



- (d) **Other Categories of Development – approval may be justified in particular cases for other developments which would meet the criteria for development within a Green Belt or Countryside Policy Area where access cannot reasonably be obtained from an adjacent minor road.**

**Other Protected Routes – Within Settlement Limits**

**Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal involving direct access, or the intensification of the use of an existing access:**

- (a) **where access cannot reasonably be taken from an adjacent minor road; or**
- (b) **in the case of proposals involving residential development, it is demonstrated to the Department’s satisfaction that the nature and level of access onto the Protected Route will significantly assist in the creation of a quality environment without compromising standards of road safety or resulting in an unacceptable proliferation of access points.**

## **Justification and Amplification**

5.24 The Department has a long established policy of restricting access onto the main roads that facilitate the efficient movement of traffic over long distances in Northern Ireland. These roads contribute significantly to economic prosperity by providing efficient links between all the main towns, airports and seaports, and with the Republic of Ireland.

5.25 The roads onto which this policy of access control is exercised are known as ‘Protected Routes’ and comprise:

- primary routes;
- routes between the principal town in each District and/or cross border;
- routes to ports and airports; and
- selected routes with high traffic flows.

This encompasses the road element of the Regional Strategic Transport Network contained in the Regional Development Strategic.

- 5.26 Annex B contains an up to date map identifying the existing roads throughout Northern Ireland established as Protected Routes. Any future alterations will be brought forward and published by the Department for Regional Development, Roads Service.
- 5.27 The Protected Routes have progressively been improved over the years, including the building of motorways, ring roads, through-passes, by-passes and dual carriageways. It is important that a new access or intensified use of an existing access onto a protected route does not compromise their function of facilitating the free and safe movement of traffic or does not significantly add to congestion. Additionally on stretches of Protected Routes designed specifically to facilitate the efficient and safe movement of traffic, it is essential that access which would compromise road safety or prejudice their design standards, is severely restricted.
- 5.28 In all cases, where access to a Protected Route is acceptable in principle, it will also be required to be safe in accordance with Policy AMP 2.

## **Policy AMP 4 Protection for New Transport Schemes**

**Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the implementation of a transport scheme identified in a development plan.**

### **Justification and Amplification**

- 5.29 It is important to ensure that land needed to facilitate a new transport scheme (such as a road scheme, improvements to pedestrian or cycle networks or a public transport scheme and associated facilities) is protected from development that would prejudice its implementation. Such land will be identified in the relevant development plan.
- 5.30 The following matters will be taken into account in assessing whether the implementation of a particular scheme would be prejudiced by a development proposal:
- the nature of the proposal;
  - the programming of the transport scheme; and
  - the extent to which implementation of the scheme would be compromised by the carrying out of the proposed development.
- 5.31 It is recognised that blight resulting from the need to protect land required for a future transport scheme can have a damaging impact on an area. Every effort will be made to minimise the effects of blight and where this is unavoidable provision exists to compensate landowners whose land is required for such schemes.

## Policy AMP 5 Disused Transport Routes

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the future re-use of a disused transport route identified in a Development Plan for transport or recreational purposes.

### Justification and Amplification

- 5.32 Northern Ireland historically had an extensive transport network comprising roads, railway lines and stations, canals and associated towpaths, locks etc. Many of these former transport routes have potential for re-use either for transportation purposes or for recreation, leisure or tourism.
- 5.33 A number of disused rail and canal facilities offer important opportunities through the re-opening of their former transportation mode, while other former transport routes may present opportunities for alternative transport modes. This could include new public transport corridors or use as pedestrian routes or for cycle networks.
- 5.34 Many of the disused railway lines and inland waterways of Northern Ireland also have great potential for public access, recreation and tourism. Some have already been reclaimed for such purposes, such as the Newry Canal, the Foyle Valley Railway and the Shannon/Erne Canal Link.
- 5.35 Development plans will identify those disused transport routes, together with any associated facilities, where proposals exist for their re-use and disused routes of strategic importance which offer potential in the longer term for future transport use.

## **Policy AMP 6 Transport Assessment**

**In order to evaluate the transport implications of a development proposal the Department will, where appropriate, require developers to submit a Transport Assessment.**

### **Justification and Amplification**

- 5.36 The control of development offers the opportunity to consider proposals in terms of their impact on existing transport movements and infrastructure within the context of wider government policy aimed at achieving more sustainable travel patterns through a change in transport behaviour. This can best be achieved through the process of Transport Assessment (TA)<sup>8</sup>.
- 5.37 The coverage and detail of a TA should reflect the scale of development and the extent of the transport implications of the proposal. In applications for significant traffic generating uses, a TA may need to be accompanied by a travel plan. The Draft guidelines to Transport Assessment in Northern Ireland (2004) issued jointly by DRD and DOE provides detailed information on this process and should be referred to directly.
- 5.38 In keeping with General Principle 5 set out in PPS 13 Transportation and Land Use, developers will be required to bear the costs of transport infrastructure necessitated by their development.

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that Transport Assessment replaces Traffic Impact Assessment. The TA process continues to include assessment of traffic impacts.

## **Policy AMP 7 Car Parking and Servicing Arrangements**

Development proposals will be required to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangements. The precise amount of car parking will be determined according to the specific characteristics of the development and its location having regard to the Department's published standards<sup>9</sup> or any reduction provided for in an area of parking restraint designated in a development plan. Proposals should not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic.

Beyond areas of parking restraint identified in a development plan, a reduced level of car parking provision may be acceptable in the following circumstances:

- where, through a Transport Assessment, it forms part of a package of measures to promote alternative transport modes; or
- where the development is in a highly accessible location well served by public transport; or
- where the development would benefit from spare capacity available in nearby public car parks or adjacent on street car parking; or
- where shared car parking is a viable option; or
- where the exercise of flexibility would assist in the conservation of the built or natural heritage, would aid rural regeneration, facilitate a better quality of development or the beneficial re-use of an existing building.

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<sup>9</sup> The Department has published supplementary guidance on parking standards to accompany the publication of this PPS.

**Proposals involving car parking in excess of the Department's published standards or which exceed a reduction provided for in a development plan will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.**

**In assessing car parking provision the Department will require that a proportion of the spaces to be provided are reserved for people with disabilities in accordance with best practice. Where a reduced level of car parking provision is applied or accepted, this will not normally apply to the number of reserved spaces to be provided.**

## **Justification and Amplification**

- 5.39 The availability of car parking is a major influence on the means of transport people choose for their journeys, even for those locations well served by public transport. This combined with increasing car ownership levels is contributing to a growth in traffic congestion in many city and town centres. The provision of car parking in association with development therefore needs to be considered within the context of wider government policy aimed at achieving more sustainable travel patterns.
- 5.40 To tackle growing congestion problems and help reduce reliance on the private car the Department considers that in certain instances it will no longer be appropriate or desirable for developers to fully meet demand for car parking generated by their developments. This is especially the case in city and larger town centres and other defined locations where alternative modes of transport exist, can be provided or services improved. A development plan may designate an area of parking restraint, within which a reduction in the Department's published car parking standards will be applied (see Para 4.11). Beyond these areas of parking restraint there may also be situations where a reduction in car parking provision in association with new development will be acceptable.

- 5.41 A reduction in parking provision may be accepted where it forms part of a package of measures to promote alternative transport modes, particularly where this has been demonstrated and accepted through the Transport Assessment process. Reduced parking provision may also be acceptable in locations which are highly accessible and well served by public transport. This includes many town and district centres and locations close to public transport interchanges.
- 5.42 On occasion reduced parking provision may be appropriate where new development is proposed close to existing public car parking and it is demonstrated there is available spare capacity. Reduced parking provision may also be acceptable where schemes propose shared parking arrangements, particularly in town centres or as part of major proposals. For example office and leisure uses (such as cinemas) where shared car parking is a viable option because the peak levels of use do not coincide.
- 5.43 It may also be acceptable for small-scale developments, which do not generate significant parking demand, to rely on using on-street parking for a proportion of their parking provision. In assessing these options the Department will require evidence to demonstrate the capacity and availability of such alternative parking provision.
- 5.44 In assessing developments affecting conservation areas, areas of townscape character or the surroundings of listed buildings, it may not always be possible or desirable to provide the full standard of parking provision. In order to protect the character and appearance of these features of the built heritage or assist with the retention of trees, a reduction in parking provision may be considered acceptable. There may also be occasions where flexibility in the level of car parking provision will help facilitate a better quality development or facilitate the beneficial re-use of an existing building.



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- 5.45 Where parking reduction is considered acceptable in principle the Department will negotiate the precise level of reduction with developers. Account will be taken of the specific characteristics of the development, its location and its accessibility to means of travel other than the private car, including any measures proposed to promote alternative transport modes.
- 5.46 In many locations however it will remain important that development makes adequate provision for car parking. This is particularly important in rural areas and those towns and villages where the potential for using public transport is limited. Accordingly, with the exceptions outlined above, development proposals in areas not subject to parking restraint through the development plan process will generally be expected to meet the Department's parking standards.
- 5.47 Parking provision in excess of the published standards will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. For example it is recognised that in city and town centres a balance has to be struck between encouraging new investment by providing adequate levels of parking and potentially increasing traffic congestion caused by too many cars. Accordingly, where major retail or leisure developments are proposed in a town centre or an edge of centre site, parking provision additional to the normal standard may be considered acceptable. In such instances it must be demonstrated that the parking facilities will genuinely serve the town centre as a whole and a legal agreement to this effect will be required before planning permission is granted.
- 5.48 Given that the car is often the only form of transport available to many people with disabilities developers will be required to reserve an appropriate proportion of parking spaces to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Such designated parking spaces should be conveniently located to facilitate ease of access to the buildings they serve in order to take account of the limited mobility range of many disabled people. Best practice on the number, size and layout of reserved parking spaces is set out in the Department's guide 'Access for All'.

- 5.49 Consideration should also be given to the provision of public transport facilities for able-bodied people and people with disabilities who do not have access to a car. In larger schemes provision should be made for appropriately located bus stops, including set-down and pick-up bays for vehicles such as public and private hire taxis which are wheelchair compatible.
- 5.50 For retail, leisure and community uses consideration should be given by developers to the provision of 'parent and child' parking spaces. As with spaces reserved for people with disabilities these should be located in a manner, which facilitates ease of access to the buildings they serve.
- 5.51 The Department's policy for parking associated with residential development is set out in PPS 7 "Quality Residential Environments' and parking standards are currently contained in the design guide 'Creating Places'. Development Control Advice Note 8 – Housing in Existing Urban Areas recognises that levels of provision lower than those set out in Creating Places may be appropriate. For example in urban contexts where there is good pedestrian access to local facilities and public transport, or where townscape character would be undermined.
- 5.52 Servicing arrangements are also important and can exert a major influence on the quality of the urban environment and its attractiveness to shoppers and other visitors. In city and town centre locations, developers will normally be expected to include proposals for the provision of rear servicing facilities where practicable. It is recognised, however, that historic settlement patterns may be a constraint upon the provision of rear servicing.

## **Policy AMP 8 Cycle Provision**

Planning permission will only be granted for development providing jobs, shopping, leisure and services, including educational and community uses where the needs of cyclists are taken into account. Where appropriate provision of the following may be required:

- (a) safe and convenient cycle access;
- (b) safe, convenient and secure cycle parking having regard to the Department's published standards; and
- (c) safe and convenient cycle links to existing or programmed cycle networks where they adjoin the development site.

In addition major employment generating development will be required to make appropriate provision for shower and changing facilities.

### **Justification and Amplification**

- 5.53 Cycling is a popular mode of travel for an increasing number of people. Like walking it is healthy, pollution free and makes relatively small demands on land. Within Northern Ireland 45% of all journeys presently made are less than two miles in length and cycling has the potential to replace the car for a great variety of these short journeys and to form part of a longer journey when linked to onward travel by public transport. The Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy (June 2000) highlights the important contribution cycling can make in an integrated transport system and has set a target to quadruple the number of trips by cycle by 2015.
- 5.54 Cycling is a relatively inexpensive transport mode and the cost of infrastructure provision is low in comparison to other modes. Measures to support cycling can be readily integrated with both

new development and existing private and public transport. The promotion of cycling as a travel opportunity is also part of the drive to promote alternatives to the private car and encourage more sustainable means of travel. One step in this process will be to improve the provision, safety, convenience and general environment for cycling by ensuring that the needs of cyclists are fully taken into account in the development process.

- 5.55 To help promote cycle use the amount of good quality cycle parking needs to be increased. It is important therefore that secure cycle parking is provided as an integral part of development providing jobs, shopping, leisure and services. It should also be available in town and district centres, at educational institutions and public transport interchanges, including Park and Ride and Park and Share sites. Proposals will be assessed against the Department's published parking standards.
- 5.56 Full secure, weather protected parking will normally be required for employee cycle parking. Weather protection will also be required for visitor parking where space for ten or more cycles is provided or in cases where medium to long-term cycle parking is required, for instance at public transport interchanges.
- 5.57 Security is a major consideration in determining the location of cycle parking areas which should be provided closer to a building's entrance than car-parking. They should be well lit and located where staff or the public can provide informal surveillance. Staff parking can best be provided within a building.
- 5.58 Major employment generating developments will be expected to provide shower and changing facilities conveniently located to the provision of cycle parking to encourage and facilitate those who travel to work by bicycle.
- 5.59 Cycle parking provision in association with residential development is addressed in PPS 7 'Quality Residential Environments' and the design guide 'Creating Places'.

## **Policy AMP 9 Design of Car Parking**

The Department will expect a high standard of design, layout and landscaping to accompany all proposals for car parking. Planning permission will only be granted for a proposal where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) it respects the character of the local townscape / landscape;
- (b) it will not adversely affect visual amenity; and
- (c) provision has been made for security, and the direct and safe access and movement of pedestrians and cyclists within the site.

### **Justification and Amplification**

5.60 The amount and arrangement of car parking can have a significant impact on the quality of both the built and natural environment. All proposals for parking and associated facilities should therefore be well designed, respect local character and their wider setting. They should also provide for safe and convenient access / egress and direct and safe internal movement for cyclists and pedestrians, including people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired.

5.61 Security is of particular importance in the design of car parks. The Department will therefore expect developers to address this matter, particularly in relation to multi-storey and basement car parking, and would encourage developers to seek advice from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Architectural Liaison Service.

#### *Surface Level Car Parks*

5.62 Surface level car parking should generally be broken up to avoid the creation of a vast expanse of "dead space". This can be achieved by way of a well-designed landscape scheme, which

includes appropriate boundary and surface treatments. In urban situations the re-arrangement of buildings and space within the layout may in some instances be a more appropriate solution.

### *Temporary Car Parks*

- 5.63 In assessing proposals for temporary car parks on sites awaiting redevelopment the Department will normally still require a landscaping scheme incorporating details of boundary and surface treatments.

### *Multi-storey Car Parks*

- 5.64 The design of multi-storey car parks should reflect the character and appearance of the surrounding townscape in terms of form, scale, massing and use of materials. Building lines should adhere to those already established, while public facades in particular should be designed to create visual interest. Blank screen walls will not be acceptable as these can have a negative impact on the street scene.

### *Parking within Buildings*

- 5.65 The design of basement or semi-basement car parks requires careful attention to ensure that they are safe to use and do not have a negative impact at street level by the creation of dead frontage.
- 5.66 Surface parking underneath a raised ground floor can create the same effect to an even greater extent, particularly where ground floor elevations are entirely made up of metal grids or finished in an unimaginative way. This can effectively remove life from the street and contribute to the creation of a threatening and unpleasant environment. Such an approach to the provision of car parking will be unacceptable.

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### *Rural Car Parks*

- 5.67 The amount and arrangement of car parking in rural locations can have a significant impact on the natural environment, particularly in sensitive locations. The development of larger schemes in the countryside, such as those to serve tourist facilities or rural golf courses, need particular care in respect of their scale and design. Overflow parking to cater for increased demand for special events should not generally be a hardened surface and use should be made of concrete grass pavers with pockets of soil which encourage the growth of grass, general vegetation or shrubs to hide the concrete.
- 5.68 The design, layout and landscaping of rural car parks should seek to retain the open nature and visual amenity of the countryside. In addition matters such as floodlighting, will require careful design in order to minimise their impact on visual amenity.

## **Policy AMP 10 Provision of Public and Private Car Parks**

Planning permission will only be granted for the development or extension of public or private car parks, including park and ride and park and share where it is demonstrated that:

- they do not significantly contribute to an increase in congestion;
- are not detrimental to local environmental quality;
- they meet a need identified by the Department for Regional Development in Transport Plans or accepted by DRD following robust analysis provided by a developer ;
- within defined areas of parking restraint they are only used for short-stay parking and are appropriately managed to deter long stay commuter parking; and
- they are compatible with adjoining land uses.

### **Justification and Amplification**

5.69 It is recognised that the provision of adequate public parking facilities can act as a stimulant to economic development whilst having environmental and safety benefits in locations such as town and city centres which generate a considerable demand. Public car parking facilities normally comprise:

- On -street car parking controlled by the DRD;
- Public car parks operated by the DRD; and
- Public car parks operated by the private sector including temporary car parks on sites awaiting redevelopment (these include long and short-stay parking and the leasing of contract spaces).



5.70 Of critical importance to the supply of public car parking facilities is the type of parking to be provided. Within town and city centres in particular it is essential that sufficient short-stay public parking facilities are available to maintain economic vitality and viability and to allow them to compete with new out-of-centre developments. An ever-increasing supply of car parking spaces solely serving long-stay commuter demand in such locations on the other hand can act as an impediment to economic growth by contributing to increased congestion and the erosion of environmental quality.

5.71 Accordingly the Department considers that public parking provision in future should focus on meeting the demand generated by centres for short-stay spaces. However the overall transportation objective will nevertheless be to restrain the use of the car and encourage shoppers and commuters to use public transport and Park and Ride initiatives.

5.72 The development and operation of public car parks by the private sector, including multi-storey provision and temporary car parks should seek to complement existing parking provision and the Department's approach to meeting short-stay needs. In locations where a proposal is considered acceptable, the Department will require developers to enter into a Planning Agreement under Article 40 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 to control the use of parking spaces in order to deter long-stay commuter parking. This will normally include restrictions on the leasing of contract spaces.

#### *Park and Ride / Park and Share*

5.73 The Department will promote the development of Park and Ride and Park and Share facilities in appropriate locations where these will reduce the number of cars entering central urban areas and promote the use of public transport.

- 5.74 Government Transportation Policy places greater emphasis on alternatives to the private car and on more effective use of motorised transport. Promotion of park and share to increase the occupancy of cars entering urban areas can contribute to a reduction in traffic. Where clear benefits can be identified the Department will promote the creation of park and share sites.
- 5.75 The establishment of Park and Ride sites and associated services will also be an important contribution to integrated transport. Such schemes seek to persuade car users to change to public transport (bus or train) for the final part of their journey to major urban centres thereby reducing the level of congestion and pollution in the centre. They should also contribute to the economic viability of the centre by avoiding the use of land at the centre for car parking which, for economic and environmental reasons, would be better put to other purposes.
- 5.76 Park and Share should normally be sited at key junctions on the motorway and trunk road network. Park and Ride sites should preferably be located within settlements. Ideal locations are public transport interchanges. It is recognised however that there may be occasions where a countryside / green belt location may be needed for such development and this may be appropriate provided that all the following are met:
- a comprehensive assessment of potential sites, to meet the identified need, has been carried out. This should include both non-green belt and, if appropriate, other green belt locations;
  - the assessment establishes that the proposed green belt site is a sustainable option taking account of all relevant factors including travel impacts;
  - the scheme will not seriously compromise the purposes of including land in the green belt;
  - the proposal is contained within the local transport plan or based on a thorough assessment of travel impacts; and
  - any buildings forming part of the development proposal are essential to the operation of the park and ride/share scheme.

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5.77 The layout, design and landscaping of Park and Ride and Park and Share sites is particularly important in rural locations (see also Policy AMP 9 Design of Car Parks). Provision of facilities, such as floodlighting, which are generally considered essential to the safe operation of such sites, will need careful design to ensure that they are not visually intrusive.

## **Policy AMP 11 Temporary Car Parks**

Planning permission will not be granted for the development of a temporary car park unless it is demonstrated that:

- it complies with Policy AMP 10 and the developer can show that a need exists which cannot be met in the short term by the Department or the private sector; and
- it is submitted in conjunction with programmed proposals to develop / redevelop the site in question.

Planning permission if granted will be subject to a time-limited condition for a period of 1 year.

### **Justification and Amplification**

- 5.78 Developers often seek approval for temporary car parking on sites which have been acquired for development. This must be seen as a short-term expediency and the long-term existence of such car parks may be contrary to both transportation and broader environmental objectives.
- 5.79 While planning applications for temporary car parks, including public car parking, will be assessed in the light of all relevant factors, there will be a presumption against such development where it is considered unnecessary and is not linked to firm proposals for the development of the site. Developers should note that a time limited planning permission for temporary use of land for car parking will not normally be renewed.

# Annex A: Divisional Planning Offices

## Planning Service Headquarters

Millennium House  
19 - 25 Great Victoria Street  
BELFAST, BT2 7BN  
Tel No: (028) 9041 6858  
Fax No: (028) 9041 6801  
Text Phone: (028) 9054 0642  
E-mail: [planning.service.hq@nics.gov.uk](mailto:planning.service.hq@nics.gov.uk)

## District Council Divisional Planning Office

Antrim	Ballymena Divisional Planning Office
Ballymena	County Hall
Carrickfergus	182 Galgorm Road
Larne	BALLYMENA, BT42 1QF
Magherafelt	Tel No: (028) 2565 3333
	Fax No: (028) 2566 2127
	E-mail: <a href="mailto:divisional.planning.office.ballymena@nics.gov.uk">divisional.planning.office.ballymena@nics.gov.uk</a>

Armagh	Craigavon Divisional Planning Office
Banbridge	Marlborough House
Craigavon	Central Way
Newry & Mourne	CRAIGAVON, BT64 1AD
	Tel No: (028) 3834 1144
	Fax No: (028) 3834 1065
	E-mail: <a href="mailto:divisional.planning.office.craigavon@nics.gov.uk">divisional.planning.office.craigavon@nics.gov.uk</a>

Derry	Londonderry Divisional Planning Office
Limavady	Orchard House
	40 Foyle Street
	LONDONDERRY, BT46 6AT
	Tel No: (028) 7131 9900
	Fax No: (028) 7131 9777
	E-mail: <a href="mailto:divisional.planning.office.londonderry@nics.gov.uk">divisional.planning.office.londonderry@nics.gov.uk</a>

Belfast	Belfast Divisional Planning Office
Castlereagh	Bedford House
Newtownabbey	16 – 22 Bedford Street
	BELFAST BT2 7FD
	Tel No: (028) 9025 2800
	Fax No: (028) 9025 2828
	E-mail: <a href="mailto:divisional.planning.office.belfast@nics.gov.uk">divisional.planning.office.belfast@nics.gov.uk</a>

**District Council    Divisional Planning Office**

Ards  
Down  
Lisburn  
North Down

Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office  
Rathkelter House  
Market Street  
DOWNPATRICK, BT30 6EJ  
Tel No:       (028) 4461 2211  
Fax No:       (028) 4461 8196  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.downpatrick@nics.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.downpatrick@nics.gov.uk)

Cookstown  
Dungannon  
Omagh  
Strabane

Omagh Divisional Planning Office  
County Hall  
Drumragh Avenue  
OMAGH, BT79 7AE  
Tel No:       (028) 8225 4000  
Fax No:       (028) 8225 4010  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.omagh@nics.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.omagh@nics.gov.uk)

**District Council    Sub-Divisional Planning Office**

Ballymoney  
Coleraine  
Moyle

Coleraine Sub-Divisional Planning Office  
County Hall  
Castlerock Road  
COLERAINE, BT51 3HS  
Tel No:       (028) 7034 1300  
Fax No:       (028) 7034 1434  
E-mail: [divisional.planning.office.coleraine@nics.gov.uk](mailto:divisional.planning.office.coleraine@nics.gov.uk)

Fermanagh

Enniskillen Sub-Divisional Planning Office  
County Buildings  
15 East Bridge Street  
ENNISKILLEN, BT74 7BW  
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# Annex B: Map of Protected Routes

