

Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation

Integrated Impact Assessment



Department for
**Regional
Development**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION TO INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 1.1 This Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been prepared by the Department for Regional Development (DRD). An IIA was carried out on “Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation.”
- 1.2 An IIA is a policy tool designed to inform a policy and strategy-making process by determining the potential impact of that policy or strategy. Where a policy is found to have a substantial adverse impact on any group or individual, consideration must be given to the scope for the policy to be adjusted to mitigate or lessen the impact before it is implemented.
- 1.3 This IIA has been used to assess the impact of the New Approach. To assist in your analysis of this IIA you should refer to the document “Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future: A New Approach to Regional Transportation”, which is published along with this and other assessments.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

- 2.1 The current Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012, published in July 2002, was successful in securing high levels of public funding for transportation infrastructure. However the speed and direction of change in society has overtaken this RTS. The pressure on our transportation system has increased more quickly than had originally been forecast, with now over 1 million cars on our roads.
- 2.2 The New Approach summarises where we are at present in transportation terms, sets out a range of outcomes which we want to achieve and proposes how to get there. The New Approach seeks to build on the current RTS and move towards greater sustainability against likely fiscal constraints. It concentrates on moving people, rather than vehicles, creating space on the network for people and also for freight, and on maintaining what is in place and using it in a smarter way.
- 2.3 Within the New Approach are a tiered set of High Level Aims and Strategic Objectives to reflect the challenges faced. These Strategic Objectives (set out at Annex B) are linked to the Executive's priorities outlined in the Programme for Government, through to the aims of the new Regional Development Strategy and the transportation vision:
- 'To have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the*

environment and which actively contributes to everyone's quality of life'

3.0 CONSULTATION ON INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1 We consulted on the New Approach and the IIA from 16 March 2011 to 28 June 2011.

3.2 In the consultation we invited: views on the conclusions reached in the draft assessment; and asked for any further information.

3.3 We also asked for responses to three Questions,
IIA Consultation Question 1

Do you have any views on the conclusions reached by the Department to screen out from further assessment the implications of the revised draft RTS in respect of:

Crime

Community Safety and Victims

Health

Human Rights

Economic Appraisal

Economic Assessment

Regulatory

State Aid

IIA Consultation Question 2

Do you agree or disagree with the outcome of the Rural Impact Assessment?

If not, what qualitative and quantitative evidence do you have to support this view?

IIA Consultation Questions 3

Do you agree or disagree with the outcome of the Sustainable Development Assessment?

If not, what qualitative and quantitative evidence do you have to support this view?

- 3.4 No responses were received relating to the Integrated Impact Assessment.

4.0 APPROACH TO THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The first stage in the IIA process was to screen the New Approach to decide which, if any, aspects should be subjected to further impact assessment. Table 1 in Section 6 identifies those impact assessments that either do or do not require a full assessment.
- 4.2 The second stage was to perform more detailed impact assessments on those aspects of the New Approach that require a full assessment. Those identified are listed in Section 6.3.

5.0 CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE EVIDENCE

5.1 A Discussion Document was issued for public consultation as part of the review process. This specifically asked whether there were any particular equality or health issues that we needed to consider when revising the RTS. Responses mentioned:

- ensuring we have a reliable and affordable public transport system to address the needs of those that don't have access to a car or live in a rural or socially deprived area;
- more exercise will help to reduce obesity levels;
- reduced traffic congestion will improve Air Quality;
- increased use of public transport; and
- improvements to Road Safety.

These were addressed in the development of the New Approach.

Public consultation on the New Approach took place between 16 March and 28 June 2011.

The review of the Strategy was welcomed by all given the changes that have occurred since 2002; the global economic downturn, changes in legislation, climate change, sustainability and the Executive's focus on the development of the local economy. It was apparent that there was an overall acknowledgement of the considerable improvements made to transport services in implementing the current Strategy. Many stated, however, that more still needed to be undertaken.

The vast majority of responses signalled support for the aims of the consultation to be inclusive, realistic, meaningful and relevant.

Many also recognised that no strategy can be developed in isolation from the current budgetary constraints.

There was unanimous acknowledgement that a new approach was necessary and that it should support the objectives for the development of the region set out in the revised Regional Development Strategy.

Analysis of the responses helped to inform this final Assessment.

6.0 OUTCOME OF SCREENING

6.1 The IIA assesses the policy impact on the 3 interlinked pillars within the Sustainable Development Strategy:

- Social
- Economic
- Environmental

6.2 Screening exercises were undertaken to assist in ascertaining which areas required full impact assessments. Table 1 identifies those impact assessments/appraisals that either do or do not require a full assessment/appraisal.

TABLE 1 - OUTCOME OF SCREENING EXERCISE

IMPACT ASSESSMENT / APPRAISAL	FULL ASSESSMENT / APPRAISAL REQUIRED		REASON
	Yes	No	
SOCIAL IMPACTS			
Crime		X	No impact
Community Safety & Victims		X	Slight positive impact
Equality	X		Executive requirement
Health		X	The New Approach will have a positive impact on health through improved access to services, reduced air pollution and improved walking and cycling provision which will contribute to more active lifestyles. It is considered that health impacts are likely to be positive and a full Health Impact Assessment is

			not appropriate
Human Rights		X	No impact
Rural		X	Slight positive impact. A Rural Proofing Statement is included at Appendix A of this document
Social Inclusion		X	Slight positive impact. Also covered by EQIA
ECONOMIC IMPACTS			
Economic Appraisal		X	No impacts envisaged. May be required as the Delivery Plans are developed.
Economic Assessment		X	No impacts envisaged. May be required as the Delivery Plans are developed.
Regulatory		X	No impacts. envisaged
State Aid		X	No impacts envisaged
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS			
Environmental	X		Habitats Regulation Assessment is an EU Directive requirement.
Strategic Environmental	X		Strategic Environmental Assessment is a requirement of an EU Directive.
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPACT		X	The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) criteria includes an assessment of sustainability.

6.3 The full assessments carried out as a result of the screening process are as follows:

- **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**, which assesses the effect of the Strategy on the Section 75 groups. *The EQIA will be published separately.*
- **Habitats Regulation Assessment** ensures that New Approach has been developed to avoid strategic environmental impact to Nature 2000 sites. *Because of the statutory basis this Report has been published as a separate document.*
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment** ensures that the New Approach has been developed to avoid significant environmental harm. It also recognises the need for a sustainable, holistic approach to development and includes the sustainable development impacts. *Because of the statutory basis the SEA Report has been published as a separate document.*

7.0 RURAL PROOFING

- 7.1 Rural Proofing has been used to make sure the New Approach will not have any differential impact on rural communities. The Rural Proofing Statement at Appendix A sets out the Department's approach to rural proofing for the New Approach. This details how we have taken account of rural communities in the development of the New Approach.
- 7.2 The Discussion Document responses identified issues affecting rural communities. This was used to influence the Strategic Objectives in the New Approach. The New Approach contains a Strategic Objective "Improve Access in Rural Areas".

8.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment of the New Approach is being undertaken on behalf of the Department by an Environmental Consultant (ENTEC).

- 8.2 The SEA recognises the need for a sustainable, holistic approach to development and the topics to be included have been identified under the 3 broad headings of social, economic and environmental. Appendix B provides an overview of the Sustainable Development Process in relation to the SEA.

9.0 MONITORING FOR POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT

- 9.1 A set of high level indicators to monitor the achievement of the New Approach Strategic Objectives will be developed as part of the Delivery Plan process. These will be monitored and reported on.

APPENDIX A

Rural Issues Statement to accompany the New Approach

Background

The New Approach summarises where we are at present in transportation terms, sets out a range of outcomes which we want to achieve and proposes how to get there. The New Approach seeks to build on the current RTS and move towards greater sustainability against likely fiscal constraints. It concentrates on moving people, rather than vehicles, creating space on the network for people and also for freight, and on maintaining what is in place and using it in a smarter way.

Within the New Approach we have developed a tiered set of High Level Aims and Strategic Objectives to reflect the challenges we face. These Strategic Objectives are linked to the Executive's priorities outlined in the Programme for Government, through to the aims of the new Regional Development Strategy and the transportation vision, viz:

'To have a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to everyone's quality of life'

The New Approach also seeks to complement other government strategies and legislative commitments such as the emerging Economic Strategy, road safety and climate change obligations,

Design

The current Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012, published in July 2002, was successful in securing high levels of public funding for transportation infrastructure. However the speed and direction of change in society has overtaken this RTS. The pressure on our transportation system has increased more quickly than had originally been forecast, with now over 1 million cars on our roads. Both climate change and the severe economic downturn are influencing our future direction.

Following a review and consultation on an initial Discussion Document, a New Approach has been prepared.

Evidence

The key issues, which emerged from consultation, were:

The New Approach was welcomed by all given the changes that have occurred since 2002; the global economic downturn, changes in legislation, climate change, sustainability and the Executive's focus on the development of the local economy. It was apparent that there was an overall acknowledgement of the considerable improvements made to transport services in implementing the current Strategy. Many stated, however, that more still needed to be undertaken.

The vast majority of responses signalled support for the aims of the consultation to be inclusive, realistic, meaningful and relevant.

Many also recognised that no strategy can be developed in isolation from the current budgetary constraints.

There was unanimous acknowledgement that the New Approach was necessary and that it should support the objectives for the

development of the region set out in the revised Regional Development Strategy.

Major Issues Highlighted

Most respondents stated that they were broadly supportive of the way forward outlined in the consultation document; however it was understood that further work would be required to successfully implement the New Approach into schemes and services on the ground.

There was substantial agreement that the New Approach should support the Executive's aim of growing the economy, with many stating that this could only be achieved through the development of sustainable transport solutions. It was universally agreed that this would only occur through the development of a sustainable, effective and efficient transportation network accessible to all. In particular it was recognised that the freight and logistics industries played an important part in the development of the economy and greater emphasis was needed to provide for the efficient movement of goods.

There was general consensus on the concentration of moving people and goods rather than vehicles and developing a transportation system aimed more at the user. There was strong acceptance that if this was to occur there needed to be a shift away from providing for private, low occupancy car travel towards the transport user and the needs of freight. This should result in the greater promotion of active travel and public transport, and making better use of the road and rail networks.

Many responses, in acknowledging the focus on the user and improvements to non-car alternatives noted that there was still a need to continue to invest and improve on roads maintenance.

They also recognised the need to selectively improve the road network to avoid congestion. Access difficulties to transport for people in rural areas were also mentioned by a number of respondents.

Only a small number of responses commented on the 3 High Level Aims of the document and registered their support. As a result in the absence of any other comments, the Department intends to proceed with these strategic aims as part of the New Approach to regional transportation.

Many consultation replies highlighted the need for change in the mindsets of both government and individuals if significant modal shift was to occur. This would require a greater consideration of where people live, work and socialise to reduce the need to travel. The need to achieve behavioural change despite severe budget constraints was strongly emphasised.

It was acknowledged that to achieve significant modal shift there was a need for high quality, more reliable, public transport services while also providing for more active travel opportunities for shorter journeys. Active travel was highlighted not only as an important means of providing sustainable transport but also of improving the general health of the population.

Many responses highlighted the detrimental impact of transport on the environment and climate change and the need to reduce related carbon emissions were seen by many as a crucial issue. It was suggested that reducing emissions and developing more sustainable transport would require significant changes in travel behaviours and require difficult decisions on how we prioritise and maximise the use of our current networks. A number of responses acknowledged the need to examine alternative fuel sources for

transport vehicles; while others suggested that free public transport should be provided for all.

A recurring theme was the need for better use of existing resources. It was suggested to develop further cross-departmental working, sharing resources between transport providers including health and education in order to reduce duplication and improve access to services.

The importance of sustainable urban planning was also raised by many suggesting that greater importance should be given to integrated land use and transport planning and which should result in a reduction in the need for travel. It was suggested that there should be greater linkage between the Regional Development Strategy and the New Approach.

The majority of responses agreed with the proposed high level transport aims, strategic objectives and strategic transport interventions within the document.

Response to Rural Proofing

Recognising that the transport needs of rural communities differ from those in urban areas, DRD developed a specific Strategic Objective *“Improve access in rural areas”*.

While other Strategic Objectives will also benefit rural communities, the inclusion of a specifically rural Strategic Objective will ensure that the needs of rural dwellers are considered when the Strategy is being implemented.

The 3 High Level Aims and their related Strategic Objectives are shown below:

A. Support the Growth of the Economy

1: Improve connectivity within the region

2: More efficiently use road space and railways

3: Better maintain transport infrastructure

4: Improve access in our towns and cities

5: Improve access in rural areas

6: Improve connections to key tourism sites

B. Enhance the quality of life for all

7: Improve Safety

8: Improve Social Inclusion

9: Develop transport programmes focussed on the user

C. Reduce the Environmental Impact of Transport

10: Reduce Green House Gas Emissions from transport

11: Protect biodiversity

12: Reduce noise and air pollution

Monitoring and Outcomes

A set of high level indicators to monitor the achievement of the Strategic Objectives will be developed as part of the Delivery Plan process. These will be monitored and reported on.

APPENDIX B

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the New Approach has been undertaken on behalf of the Department by an Environmental Consultant (ENTEC).

The SEA recognises the need for a sustainable, holistic approach to development and the topics to be included have been identified as follows under the 3 broad headings of social, economic and environmental.

Social

The SEA Framework includes objectives and criteria that support the development of safe, crime free, inclusive sustainable communities. Access to services and facilities for all members of the community in both urban and rural areas is important. The framework also recognises the need for a transportation network which meets individual need (including affordability), supports economic growth and is of sufficiently high standard to improve people's quality of life.

The nature of health and social inequalities is also acknowledged and contribution that transport can make to reducing isolation and improving cohesion should be recognised.

Economic

Continued economic growth within Northern Ireland remains a key objective. There is recognition that continued growth will place increasing demands on the transportation network.

Environment

Pressures on the environment are likely to increase as a result of climate change. Emissions caused by vehicle emissions are the main contributory factors to climate change. The New Approach has been assessed against objectives which seek to encourage reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, the SEA covers in more detail the impacts on the following areas of sustainable development:

- Air quality
- Climate change
- Landscape or land use
- The use of natural resources
- Bio-diversity within the Region
- Noise levels