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An Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland

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How this document is organised

This document has an Executive Summary on page 9 which outlines the main points made in its 8 main Sections.

Section 1: Explains the purpose of this document, it describes how the ATS Team went about developing the Strategy and gives details about how to contact us.

Section 2: Provides background information about why an Accessible Transport Strategy has been developed.

Section 3: Looks at why an Accessible Transport System is needed and some of the issues that affect access to transport for older people and people with disabilities.

Section 4: Outlines the key components of an accessible transport system and the current situation.

Section 5: Sets out the ATS Action Plan in the context of ATS strategic objectives and associated policies.

Section 6: Discusses the proposed funding and affordability of the strategy.

Section 7: Explains how progress in implementing the ATS will be reviewed and monitored.

Section 8: Contains some detailed background information.

Contents

Foreword	9
Executive Summary	11
1. Introduction	15
1.2 Purpose of this Document	15
1.3 Developing the Accessible Transport Strategy	15
2. Policy context for the development of an Accessible Transport Strategy	18
2.1 Introduction.....	18
2.2 Priorities and Budget 2005-08.....	18
2.3 The Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012.....	19
2.4 Public Transport	20
2.5 UK Transport Policy.....	20
2.6 European Transport Policy	21
2.7 Disability Discrimination Act 1995	21
2.8 Amendment of the Disability Discrimination Act	22
2.9 Equality of Opportunity & Human Rights.....	23
2.10 Targeting Social Need	23
2.11 Rural Issues	24
2.12 Health Issues.....	24
2.13 Assessment of Other Impacts	25
3. Why an accessible transport system is needed	26
3.1 Introduction.....	26
3.2 An ageing society	26
3.3 Disability in Northern Ireland	29
3.4 Problems identified during public consultation	31
3.5 Summary	32
4. Components of an Accessible Transport System.....	34
4.1 Introduction.....	34
4.2 Whole of journey approach	34
4.3 Physical accessibility of vehicles.....	35

4.4	Information that is accessible	36
4.5	Pedestrian environment	38
4.6	Conventional bus services and facilities.....	39
4.7	Trains and Stations.....	41
4.8	Taxi services.....	41
4.9	Private coach operators	43
4.10	Community Transport.....	43
4.11	Demand Responsive Transport.....	45
4.12	Door-to-Door Services.....	45
4.13	Shopmobility	46
4.14	Better co-ordination of transport services.....	47
4.15	Private car travel	48
4.16	Concessionary Fares	52
4.17	Air and Sea travel.....	53
5.	The ATS Action Plan	55
5.1	Introduction.....	55
5.2	Vision for Accessible Transport in Northern Ireland.....	55
5.3	Working with older people and people with disabilities	56
5.4	Strategic Objectives.....	58
5.5	Action Plan	59
6.	Proposed funding and affordability of the Strategy	85
7.	Implementation, monitoring and review of the ATS.....	87
7.1	Introduction.....	87
7.2	Implementation arrangements.....	87
7.3	Monitoring progress.....	87
7.4	Review of the Strategy	88
7.5	The planning cycle and Government spending	88
7.6	Involving older people and people with disabilities.....	88
8.	Appendices	90
Appendix A:	Statistics.....	90
Appendix B:	Glossary of Terms	92

Appendix C: Community Transport Organisations94
Appendix D: Door-to-door services in larger urban areas.97
Appendix E: Bibliography99

Foreword

This Accessible Transport Strategy has sought to address a wide range of barriers that impede use of the transport system by older people and people with disabilities - barriers which prevent them from carrying out everyday functions or leave them excluded from activities that others are able to enjoy. That is why our vision for an accessible transport future is -



Rt. Hon. John Spellar MP

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

Through its work on this Strategy my Department has examined a wide range of issues that affect the use of the transport system by older people and people with disabilities. This process has been informed by extensive public consultation and I would wish to thank everyone who has taken part in this process. The Strategy has been refined in light of these comments and many changes have been made to policies and actions to address the "gaps" identified in the draft Strategy.

The ATS is about mainstreaming - about building in accessibility for older people and people with disabilities in all programmes. Providing new public transport vehicles, which comply with DDA accessibility standards, installing dropped kerbs and tactile paving in new footways or making information available in a range accessible formats are design standards now regarded as the norm.

Work on this Strategy has revealed that much progress is being made - both within DRD, across other Departments and by public, private and community transport providers. By fully integrating accessibility considerations into the planning and operation of the transport system we can ensure that no new barriers are created. This Strategy provides a solid foundation for taking forward the accessible transport agenda. In doing so it will be critical to ensure that all this work being done by

Government Departments and other agencies is complementary, to ensure that we optimise experience, expertise and resources.

Government aims to ensure that the transport system plays its part in bringing about a more inclusive society. We are committed to a process of continuously improving the accessibility of the transport system. The implementation of this Strategy will, I believe, help to eliminate the barriers that prevent many people from leading independent and fulfilling lives.

Rt. Hon. John Spellar MP
Minister of State for Northern Ireland

Executive Summary

Developing an Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) for Northern Ireland

Older people and people with disabilities make up a significant proportion of the Northern Ireland population and they face a number of barriers when trying to make use, or make full use, of the transport system. Transport accessibility is about providing transport services, infrastructure and information that provides for equitable access. This Strategy aims to address the barriers that prevent older people and people with disabilities from using the transport system.

The Accessible Transport Strategy stems from the Regional Transportation Strategy and has been developed in the context of the Priorities and Budget 2005 – 2008¹ that sets out the Government's priorities and spending plans for Northern Ireland for the 3-year period 2005-06 to 2007-08. It has been prepared against the background of wider transportation policy in Great Britain and the European Union.

The Statistical information presented illustrates that:

- older people and people with disabilities make up an increasingly significant proportion of society in Northern Ireland;
- the range of disabilities that people experience is wide, in both nature and severity, which impacts on the type of transport requirements they have and the transport opportunities available to them; and
- both older people and people with disabilities typically have low incomes.

Analysis of the data, along with the information gathered during the period of initial consultation on the ATS, highlights that the most prominent barriers faced by older people and people with disabilities are:

- physical accessibility of both the built environment and the vehicles used to supply transport services;
- attitudes of both staff providing transport services and the general public;

- availability of relevant, up-to-date information in formats that people need and knowing where the appropriate information can be accessed; and
- affordability of transport services.

A Vision of an accessible transport future and strategic objectives and policies were formulated in the light public consultation, consideration of the current transport situation in Northern Ireland and a review of literature and best practice. The Vision is:

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

The ATS Strategic Objectives are:

Strategic Objective 1 (SO1):

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

Strategic Objective 2 (SO2):

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

Strategic Objective 3 (SO3):

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

Strategic Objective 4 (SO4):

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

Strategic Objective 5 (SO5):

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

Strategic Objective 6 (SO6):

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

Strategic Objective 7 (SO7):

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

This strategy cannot cover in detail everything that will be done over the next 10 years. It includes an Action Plan that sets out the policies that support these strategic objectives and initiatives, which, if implemented, will make significant progress towards achieving the strategic objectives and help to realise the vision for accessible transport in Northern Ireland.

Implementation of the ATS will be achieved principally through a number of key initiatives identified in the RTS which are included in Transport Plans as well as other spending programmes such as the Rural Transport Fund, the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities and the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fare Scheme. Those responsible for implementing Transport Plans and for managing other transportation spending programmes will have regard to the ATS Strategic Objectives and policies when carrying out this work.

Some initiatives included in the ATS Action Plan involve changes to administrative processes or the introduction of new legislation such as the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order and further regulations about the accessibility standards for transport vehicles.

Achieving an accessible transport system will depend on, among other things, the availability of public funds to implement particular initiatives and maintain existing commitments, including the provision of frequent transport services for all users. The level of public expenditure for the Strategy will be determined through the normal budgetary process, which will take account of the financial needs of other Departments and decisions on priorities. In addition, commitments to implement major infrastructure schemes cannot be given until appropriate economic and other relevant assessments have been considered and statutory

procedures (which may result in Public Inquiries) have been satisfactorily concluded.

The success of the ATS also depends on an ongoing process of monitoring and review. The Regional Transport Strategy Steering Group will monitor the implementation of the ATS and will receive quarterly progress reports. The Department has established a Mobility and Inclusion Unit (MIU) to “champion” the ATS. A key role for the MIU would be to encourage “mainstreaming” of accessibility issues and articulate the requirements of the client group in the wider transport policy arena. It would also lead on many “cross-cutting” initiatives, track policy developments and good practice initiatives and in doing so maintain close links with counterparts in GB.

It is proposed to review and update the ATS Action Plan every 2 years. New Action Plans will be developed in a timely manner to cover subsequent years of the Strategy. Development of subsequent Action Plans will be informed by the lessons learned from the implementation of the previous Action Plans and will be subject to public consultation and relevant impact assessments.

1. Introduction

1.1.1 This Section explains the purpose of this document and describes how the ATS has been developed.

1.2 Purpose of this Document

1.2.1 The purpose of this document is to present the Department for Regional Development's Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland. This Strategy aims to overcome barriers that impede or prevent access to the transport system for older people and people with disabilities.

1.3 Developing the Accessible Transport Strategy

1.3.1 The Regional Transportation Strategy 2002- 2012² acknowledged that many people in Northern Ireland are unable to use, or make full use of, the transportation system because of the barriers they face. These can be physical barriers that are present in the built environment or the design of vehicles but they can also stem from issues such as society or individuals' attitudes, the design of services or the way in which information is provided. For these reasons, the Regional Transportation Strategy promised that DRD would develop an Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland.

1.3.2 The Regional Transportation Strategy made a commitment that DRD would determine the objectives for the Accessible Transport Strategy in consultation with relevant groups and individuals and that it would take into account the outcome of DRD's review of its Transport Programme for People with Disabilities.

1.3.3 In developing the ATS it was decided not to rely solely on statistical analysis of what we know about the lives of older people and people with disabilities but to actively involve older people and people with disabilities in this work. Extensive consultation has been carried out with older people and people with disabilities, as well as representative organisations and carers, about how lives are affected by the transport system and the key areas that people want to see improved.

1.3.4 The first step of the public consultation process started on 22 February with the publication of an "Issues Paper"³ about the proposed scope, objectives and consultation arrangements for

developing an Accessible Transport Strategy. Most of the comments received in response to the “Issues Paper” were about the proposed scope of the strategy. Many people took the opportunity to tell us about problems they experienced in getting access to the transport system. Other people who responded wanted the Department to confirm that particular things would be examined in the course of our work.

- 1.3.5 The ATS Team held 13 public meetings throughout Northern Ireland to discuss the problems people had in using the transportation system and their ideas for making it better. We worked closely with Disability Action, the Transport Advisory Committee and the Community Transport Association to use local networks and contacts to encourage older people and people with disabilities to attend meetings.
- 1.3.6 Using local contacts and networks helped us to get a broad audience of older people and people with disabilities. Most people who attended the regional meetings were members of the public rather than people from organisations that represented older people and people with disabilities. The process has helped us to understand better the barriers experienced by many people that inhibit their access to the transport system. Many good ideas about how to overcome these barriers emerged at consultation meetings.
- 1.3.7 Comments received on the “Issues Paper”, together with the information received at public meetings, were included in a report⁴ published in September 2004 on the outcome of the first phase of consultation. It also explained how the ATS Team proposed to deal with the issues raised.
- 1.3.8 Many of the areas of concern for older people and people with disabilities echoed the findings of research reports and other publications studied by the ATS Team. Drawing on both the statistical analysis and the public consultation process, we compiled long lists of problems and barriers for each type of transport area and noted possible solutions. We then investigated whether there were things that various organisations were doing or committed to doing to overcome or remove these barriers. In doing so, the ATS Team considered whether any improvements might be made to those actions and commitments that might work better. Where gaps existed, the ATS Team proposed new things that should be done.

- 1.3.9 We asked the people responsible for transport policy and for providing transport what they thought of these proposals in terms of whether these could be put into practice, the resources required and the timescale for getting things done. The Department then published a draft ATS and EQIA for public consultation in October 2004.
- 1.3.10 The Department produced this final Strategy following an analysis of comments recorded at 5 regional meetings and 59 written submissions. The nature of comments made in written submissions and those recorded by the ATS Team at public meetings differed. In the case of public meetings the weight of discussion was greatest on issues such as the lack of suitable accessible transport, the abuse of the blue badge scheme and parking problems, attitudes of transport staff and the practicalities of getting around on a day-to-day basis. Written submissions, which were mostly from representative organisations, focused mainly on the content of the ATS – its strategic objectives, policies and Action Plan.
- 1.3.11 The ATS Team said that it would be glad to receive written, oral or visual submissions on tape or video - but only written submissions were received. A full synopsis of the views and suggestions expressed by consultees together with the ATS Team's analysis is available on the Internet and was sent to those who made submissions (by their preferred means of communication).
- 1.3.12 This has been a rich consultation process, indicating a great deal of interest and insight about accessible transport issues, which has been reflected in the quality of contributions received by the Department. The Strategy has been refined in light of these comments and many changes have been made to policies and actions to address the "gaps" identified.
- 1.3.13 Section 5 of this document presents an Action Plan for carrying out the ATS. This identifies relevant policies and actions that will be followed to achieve the ATS objectives. The ATS cannot cover in detail everything that will be done over the next 10 years but carrying out the actions it contains will make significant progress towards achieving the objectives and help to realise the vision for accessible transport in Northern Ireland.
- 1.3.14 The Action Plan will be subject to ongoing monitoring and will be reviewed and updated every 2 years.

2. Policy context for the development of an Accessible Transport Strategy

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The purpose of this Section is to set out the policy context at Regional, National and European level in which the development of Accessible Transport Strategy is taking place.

2.2 Priorities and Budget 2005-08

2.2.1 The Accessible Transport Strategy has been prepared within the context of the Priorities and Budget 2005 – 2008⁵ that sets out the Government's priorities and spending plans for Northern Ireland for the 3-year period 2005-06 to 2007-08.

2.2.2 The Priorities and Budget 2005-2008 has three overarching and interlinked themes:

- Economic Competitiveness – to make Northern Ireland a more competitive and productive region;
- Building Equality and Community Cohesion – to increase opportunity for all and ensure stronger communities; and
- Better Public Services – to ensure excellent and efficient public services for all.

2.2.3 The Accessible Transport Strategy will support these themes in the following ways.

Economic Competitiveness

- initiatives that improve access to public transport and provide other accessible transport opportunities will help people that experience social exclusion to access education and training opportunities and, thereby, to enter or return to the jobs market.

Building Equality and Community Cohesion

- removing physical barriers to use of the public transport and the pedestrian environment will improve accessibility and help reduce social exclusion;

- the Concessionary Fare Scheme will reduce the financial burden of bus and rail fares for older people and people with disabilities thereby promoting mobility and independence;
- more accessible public transport services and easier interchange between different transport modes will improve personal mobility and access to shops, recreational opportunities, and other facilities; and
- older people and people with disabilities in urban and rural areas across the region will benefit from new accessible buses and better public transport. Many rural communities will gain from innovative rural bus services such as demand responsive transport services.

Better Public Services

- demand responsive and door-to-door services will provide new transport opportunities for older people and people with disabilities whose essential travel requirements would otherwise remain unmet leaving them excluded from the range of services that society has on offer.

2.3 The Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012

2.3.1 The Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012 provides a framework for the future planning, funding and delivery of land-based transportation throughout Northern Ireland. It was produced to support the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland 2025. The RDS presented a “vision” for transportation in Northern Ireland which is:

“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.”

2.3.2 The Regional Transportation Strategy signalled a move away from a transport system that is dominated by car use towards a more balanced and integrated system. The focus is on moving people and goods, rather than vehicles. Its main features include providing a transport system in which walking, cycling and public transport will be more attractive options on many trips.

2.3.3 Elements of the RTS which will benefit both older people and people with disabilities include:

- new, accessible buses and trains;
- the introduction of better inter-urban bus services and improved bus services in urban areas outside Belfast;
- the piloting of innovative public transport services that are responsive to the travel demands of people living in rural areas;
- better facilities for pedestrians: more dropped kerbs, crossing points, pedestrian refuges and other measures to cater for people with mobility impairments; and
- access improvements at rail and bus stations.

2.4 Public Transport

2.4.1 The planning and delivery of public transport in Northern Ireland is under review. In September 2002, DRD published for consultation proposals for reform of the governance under the title of "A New Start for Public Transport in Northern Ireland". The proposals included scope for increasing private sector involvement in the public transport market and the introduction of new regulatory controls but would necessitate major legislative and structural reforms.

2.4.2 The Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company, as the lead provider of public transport, has begun a review of the organisation and operations of its Translink subsidiaries to develop a more commercial approach in the delivery of services. This will involve the modernisation of its bus and rail networks to improve services for passengers. Whilst these network improvements are on-going, DRD is investigating whether and how supportive changes might be made to the governance, planning and delivery of public transport, without recourse to potentially disruptive structural reforms. The economic and social implications of any proposals, including the impact on older people and people with disabilities, will be carefully considered before any action is taken.

2.5 UK Transport Policy

2.5.1 "Transport 2010 – The 10-Year Plan"⁶ identified the need for an integrated approach to transport, considering the whole journey and matching solutions to specific problems rather than continuing with a piecemeal approach. The ATS has adopted such a "whole of journey" approach in its development.

2.5.2 The Government's recently published White Paper "The Future of Transport"⁷ recognises that demographic changes will mean that older people will comprise a greater proportion of the population in future and that steps need to be taken to ensure that transport systems and services meet the needs of older people. The White Paper notes that:

"Many older people will continue to drive and we will support them in retaining safe and independent mobility through our support of mobility centres. In addition many older people are likely to become increasingly dependent on public transport and it is important that this is accessible, reliable and affordable, and that people feel safe and secure while they are using it."

2.6 European Transport Policy

2.6.1 The European Commission White Paper on European Transport Policy sets out European Transport Policy to 2010⁸. It places users at the heart of transport policy and promotes the increased use of forms of public transport accessible to all users, including people with disabilities and older people.

2.6.2 The European Conference of Ministers of Transport adopted Consolidated Resolution 2001/3 on accessible transport in May 2001. The resolution includes the following principles:

- all policy initiatives or developments in transport and land use planning should include an evaluation of their potential impact on accessibility for older people and people with disabilities;
- all links in the transport chain need to be improved so that an accessible environment is created door-to-door; and
- close co-operation between governments, public authorities, manufacturers, operators and the people concerned is essential.

2.6.3 The Accessible Transport Strategy, with its emphasis on transport chains and a consultative approach, is in keeping with these principles.

2.7 Disability Discrimination Act 1995

2.7.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)⁹ aims to end the discrimination that many people with disabilities experience. The Act

establishes enforceable rights for people with disabilities in the areas of employment, access to goods, facilities and services and buying or letting of premises. It also allows Government to set minimum standards so that people with disabilities can use public transport easily.

2.7.2 Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) gives people with disabilities a right of access to goods, facilities, services and premises. These rights were phased in over the period 1996 to 2004.

2.7.3 The requirements apply to facilities and services in the pedestrian environment and in transport related infrastructure. Provisions under Part V of the Act, outlined in Section 4, cover transport vehicles.

2.8 Amendment of the Disability Discrimination Act

2.8.1 There is currently an exemption from Part III for any service “so far as it consists of the use of a means of transport”. In Great Britain, the Government has introduced a draft Disability Discrimination Bill¹⁰ that includes powers to lift this transport exemption.

2.8.2 The Government proposes to:

- make it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in refusing to provide, or deliberately not providing, a service which is provided to other members of the public, or in providing a service of a lower standard or on less good terms than those available to other members of the public;
- require, where reasonable, changes to any “practice, policy or procedure” which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for people with disabilities to make use of the service; and
- require, where reasonable, the provision of an auxiliary aid or service which would enable people with disabilities to make use of a service available to other members of the public.

2.8.3 The Government also proposes that the Disability Rights Commission prepare a Code of Practice for transport to help transport providers to meet their duties under Part III of the DDA when the exemption is lifted.

2.8.4 The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is the Northern Ireland Department responsible for disability rights.

DRD has responsibility for transport policy and the Department of the Environment (DOE) is responsible for driver and vehicle testing and licensing and the licensing of transport services.

- 2.8.5 In August 2004 DOE and DRD issued a consultation paper about extending Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act to transport as proposed in Great Britain. The paper outlines the possible impacts on transport services and the likely costs. OFMDFM published a proposal for a draft Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order, which included provisions to enable the transport exemption to be removed, in January 2005.

2.9 Equality of Opportunity & Human Rights

- 2.9.1 This ATS has been prepared in accordance with the Department's statutory equality obligation under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Section 75 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity within the range of social categories. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been carried out on the ATS during its development. The EQIA has been prepared as a separate document and is available from the ATS Team.

- 2.9.2 This ATS is also subject to ongoing assessment in relation to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) through Article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998. The policies contained in this document have been prepared in accordance with ECHR.

2.10 Targeting Social Need

- 2.10.1 New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) is the Government's main policy for tackling poverty and social exclusion. Increasingly households where one or more family member has a disability are over represented in terms of having low income¹¹. The ATS will, if implemented, improve access to work, healthcare, education and other services for older people and people with disabilities, which is important in ensuring social inclusion.
- 2.10.2 New TSN is currently under review. The New TSN Unit in the Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister has completed consultation on a proposed way forward, "New TSN – the way forward towards an anti-poverty strategy". The changes proposed include an overall strategic objective to improve income and living conditions of the

most disadvantaged and the creation of a Regional Poverty Action Plan.

2.11 Rural Issues

- 2.11.1 The ATS seeks to improve travel opportunities by removing barriers that older people and people with disabilities experience in all areas, including those living in rural areas, villages and small settlements. Improved accessibility of transport would contribute towards the promotion of social inclusion and target social need in rural areas.
- 2.11.2 The ATS policies detailed in Section 5 of this document impact on conventional bus services and Community Transport services, as well as proposed new ways of delivering public transport. The appropriate mix of different types of public transport service is likely to vary from location to location. Requirements and potential solutions can best be explored during the preparation of the Sub-Regional Transport Plan which will take into account the Accessible Transport Strategy. The development of the Sub-Regional Transport Plan will be informed by Local Transport Studies, the needs of local communities and by the experiences of the Rural Community Transport Partnerships.
- 2.11.3 Examples of how the ATS will affect older people and people with disabilities in rural areas include demand responsive transport which can be used by the general public but are planned in a way to meet the particular requirements of older people and people with disabilities. Other travel opportunities that enable people to have greater independent travel opportunities include those provided by Rural Community Transport Partnerships (Appendix C provides details of these organisations).

2.12 Health Issues

- 2.12.1 The initiatives and policies contained in the ATS have been developed within the policy context of the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS). A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was carried out as part of the development of the RTS. Since it was important that the HIA influenced the content of the 'final' RTS, the HIA was applied to the penultimate version of the RTS – the Proposed RTS. The approach to base the HIA on Proposed RTS was confirmed by a senior inter-departmental group on public health, supported and serviced by the Investing for Health Team in DHSSPS.

- 2.12.2 Investing for Health highlights the link between health and access to transport and services. By continuing within the RTS framework, the ATS will help to ensure that the positive health impacts predicted by the RTS HIA will be delivered. For example:
- more accessible public transport services and easier interchange between different transport modes will improve personal mobility and access to shops, recreational opportunities, and other facilities;
 - measures to improve the quality of the pedestrian environment will make the walk journey easier, encourage more walking and increase physical fitness; and
 - demand responsive and door-to-door services will provide new transport opportunities for older people and people with disabilities whose essential travel requirements would otherwise remain unmet leaving them excluded from the range of services that society has on offer. Such services will enable older people to lead more independent lifestyles, which will contribute, to an improved sense of health and well-being.

2.13 Assessment of Other Impacts

- 2.13.1 The ATS Team carried out a screening exercise using the Integrated Impact Assessment template, which took account of environmental, health and rural issues.

3. Why an accessible transport system is needed

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section of the document presents a statistical background which highlights the ageing population, the relationship between age and disability, the prevalence of disability, the range of disabilities experienced and the relationships between age, disability and poverty. Following on from this there is a discussion of the problems highlighted during the ATS consultation process and the implications these have for how transport is provided.

3.2 An ageing society

3.2.1 It is estimated that by 2025 the number of people aged 60 and over will have increased by about 54% (from 308,600 in 2003¹² to 476,000 in 2025) and the number of people aged 80 and over will have increased by about 80% (from 56,000 in 2003 to 101,000 in 2025).

3.2.2 By 2025 people over 60 will comprise about 26% of the total population (18% in 2003) and people over 80 will comprise 5.5% of the population (3.3% in 2003).

3.2.3 Current data¹³ suggests that not only is life expectancy increasing, so too is healthy life expectancy. This will have an impact not only on population demographics, but also on the labour market, the provision of goods, facilities and services and the resources needed to ensure a decent quality of life.

3.2.4 The proportion of the driving population aged 60 and above is growing, particularly female drivers. For example, in 1994, 57% of people aged 60-69 and 33% of people aged 70 and over held a full driving licence; by 2000 this had risen to 68% and 41% respectively. In 1994, 37% of women aged 60-69 and 16% of women aged 70 and over held driving licences; these figures had increased to 54% and 22% respectively by 2000¹⁴.

3.2.5 This means that individuals have a greater ability to travel and have social or activity networks that are reliant on the convenience and flexibility of the private car.

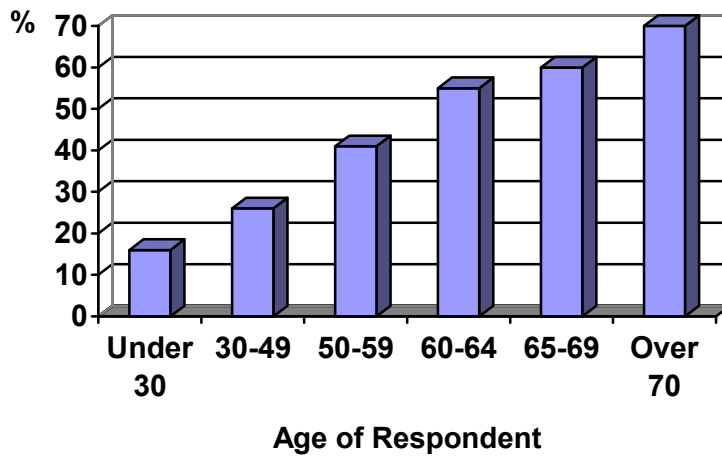
3.2.6 Nevertheless, the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (1999) found that older people travelled less than other people. Some key findings were:

- ownership or use of a car declines with age with 48% of those aged 65 and over indicating that their household did not own or have access to a car;
- fewer people aged 65 and over report that they currently drive. Frequency of car travel as a passenger is also lower among the 65 and over age group; and
- in general, usage of other modes of transport such as buses, trains and bicycles was lower among the 65 and over age group compared to younger age groups.

3.2.7 Older people often experience mobility problems when they find they are unable to use their car because of medical reasons. Department for Transport research¹⁵ has shown that those older people who have always been drivers are much less independent and mobile in old age than those who have used public transport throughout their adult lives. If a time comes when a person can no longer drive the loss of independent, flexible mobility can present social and psychological difficulties. However, public transport use for many older people will be an option only if accessibility, reliability, information and personal security are improved.

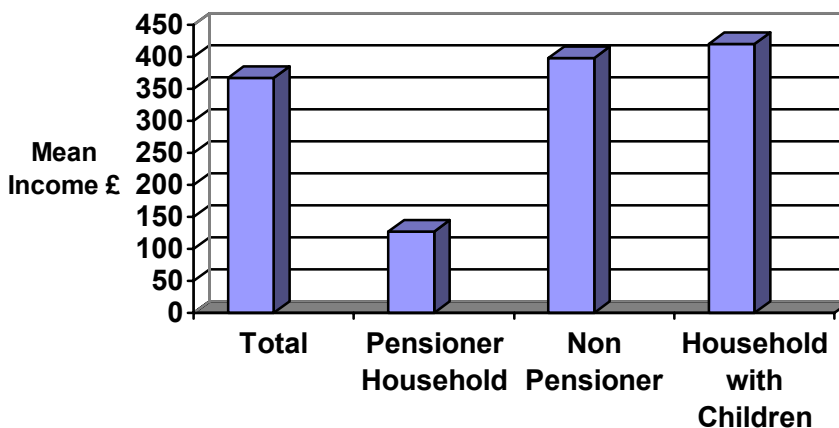
3.2.8 Age and disability are not synonymous, however there is a very strong correlation between them. It is estimated that 1/3 of older people has a disability and 2/3 of people with disabilities are over 65¹⁶. Significant change in the age structure of the population is likely to have an impact on the prevalence of long-term illness in Northern Ireland. Figure 3a shows the proportion of people reporting Long-Term Illness.

Figure 3a: Percentage of people that stated they have a long-term illness¹⁷



3.2.9 Older people typically have lower incomes. Figure 3b below illustrates the lower gross normal weekly income that older people in Northern Ireland receive compared to other groups in society. The Northern Ireland Life and Times survey revealed that 46% of pensioners surveyed stated that they were just about managing their financial situation.

Figure 3b: Gross normal weekly income by household type¹⁸



3.2.10 The implications are clear: we live in a society where the proportion of older people is rising. This group is more likely to be on low incomes and less likely to have access to a private car than other sections of the population. Older women in particular are likely to be dependent on public transport for their travel needs.¹⁹ Older people

are also likely to have one or more impairment and hence have some form of restricted mobility, while still wishing to maintain a good quality of life.

3.3 Disability in Northern Ireland

- 3.3.1 There are difficulties in estimating the prevalence of disability in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) recently commissioned a review of all the information, including definitions and estimates on the number of people in Northern Ireland with a disability. The final report concluded “there is no comprehensive data source that can be used to establish the number of individuals within Northern Ireland who have a disability, nor is there a standard method which might be applied in order to extract such information from a variety of sources”²⁰. In response to this NISRA is now undertaking a new survey of disability. A pilot exercise will begin in April 2005 and will be followed by a full survey beginning September 2005. Initial results are expected to be made available from April 2006.
- 3.3.2 Current estimates of disability vary from 18% to 28%. For example the Labour Force Survey (2003) contains a figure of 184,000 people aged between 16-64 with a disability, the 2001 Census contains a figure of 343,000 people (all ages), while the Health and Social Well-being Survey gives a figure of 360,000 (aged 16 and over). Appendix A2 provides a complete set of data sources that are currently available on the prevalence of disability in Northern Ireland. Care is needed when using any of the data sources for establishing the prevalence of disability as each source has limitations. It is broadly agreed that as many as one in five of the Northern Ireland population is a person with a disability.
- 3.3.3 People with disabilities are only about half as likely as people without disabilities to be in employment²¹. Rates of employment vary greatly between types of disability, with the lowest being people with mental illness and learning disabilities.
- 3.3.4 One of the key factors for a person with a disability entering employment is how easy or difficult it is to get to places of employment, either by public or private modes of transport¹⁵. This relationship between employment and transport illustrates that the lack of access to adequate transport is a key contributor to social exclusion. If poor transport access is a barrier to employment, then the likely outcome is increased poverty and further social exclusion.

- 3.3.5 People with disabilities are not all the same. Some people may have a disability that is not immediately obvious while others may have more than one impairment. Not all people with disabilities experience difficulties getting access to the transport system. Improvements in the design of vehicles and transport infrastructure, the way services are provided and information systems are needed to the to bring about a transport system that everyone can use.
- 3.3.6 There is a need for a mix of public, private, community and statutory transport services to be available to meet the range of transport requirements that older people and people with disabilities have. Door-to-door services, for example, recognise that some people will find it very difficult or impossible to use conventional bus and rail services no matter how accessible they become. It is important to consider the location and distance between local bus stops to remove the need for people to travel long distances in order to use a service. Seating should be provided at bus stops and on the route to bus stops, giving people the opportunity to rest, should they need to.
- 3.3.7 Features such as colour contrasting and texture on handles, steps, platform edges, kerbs and pathways, the size and type of print information, audible announcements, tactile information at bus stops and seats designed to give guide dogs space make transport easier for someone with a visual impairment.
- 3.3.8 The presence of induction loops, visual displays on vehicles and at bus stops, textphone systems to access information services and writing pads or symbol point pads at ticket windows help overcome difficulties experienced by people with a hearing impairment.
- 3.3.9 Suitably designed door handles, handrails, bell-pushes, ticket machines and train door buttons can help some people. Transport services can be made easier to use by doing things such as allowing people to use passes rather than cash or and by making transport information easier to understand.
- 3.3.10 Good lighting and design of train platforms and bus stops, the use of CCTV on buses and stations can contribute to a safer environment and help reduce fear of crime, which deters many older people, and people with disabilities from using public transport.

3.4 Problems identified during public consultation

- 3.4.1 Some older people and people with disabilities told us that they experienced a wide range of physical barriers that prevented them from making full use of the transport system, including:
- poor construction or maintenance of the pedestrian environment;
 - illegal parking and insufficient enforcement;
 - vehicles that are inaccessible; and
 - unavailability of accessible services at certain times due to service providers undertaking other contracted work.
- 3.4.2 Which of the above barriers is most significant will depend on the particular requirements of the individual. For example, for a wheelchair user the absence of a suitable accessible vehicle may be the most significant barrier whilst for an older person difficulties with crossing busy roads may be most significant.
- 3.4.3 In relation to the attitudes of both service providers and users the issues which arose frequently include:
- a lack of patience, understanding or awareness by both drivers and the general public; and
 - individuals not wanting to be seen to use 'specialised' services.
- 3.4.4 A lack of patience, understanding or awareness of their particular needs are problems that both older people and people with disabilities reported. People most likely to experience this type of problem are individuals with a disability that is not immediately apparent, such as a learning disability or a visual or hearing impairment. Commonly reported problems included not having enough time to get seated when a vehicle moves off and difficulties in communication with transport staff.
- 3.4.5 Information was identified as being key to enabling many older people and people with disabilities to travel. The problems regarding information identified during the public consultation included:
- timetable information is often inaccurate, in an unsuitable format or poorly displayed;
 - not knowing where information can be obtained; and

- difficulty with getting information on the Internet.

- 3.4.6 The format of timetable information presents problems for many transport service users. For example, a person with a visual impairment may not be able to read timetable information due to the small size of the print, a blind person needs information in either Braille or audio formats, people with a hearing impairment have problems using telephone information lines. The use of the 24-hour clock presents difficulties for many users, not least those with a learning disability. Many older people and people with disabilities do not use or have access to the Internet, therefore providing information in this format is of no use to them.
- 3.4.7 Some people told us that the cost of some transport services is a key barrier that prevents many older people and people with a disability from making full use of the transport system because many typically have low fixed incomes. The issues relating to affordability that were mentioned frequently include:
- the absence of Government support for concessionary fare schemes on modes such as taxis and community transport; and
 - difficulties with understanding the rationale behind the Concessionary Fare Scheme.
- 3.4.8 Currently the only transport opportunity available to some older people and people with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, is a private taxi or community transport service. Some people thought that they should be entitled to a concessionary fare on these services, as they could not benefit from the NI Concessionary Fare Scheme because there was no suitable public transport available to them.
- 3.4.9 Some people with a disability who have recently become entitled to a half-fare concession on Translink services, whilst appreciating the concession, questioned the rationale behind some people with disabilities getting free travel and others getting half-fare travel. They pointed out that they experienced similar problems using transport and they too are typically on low fixed incomes.

3.5 Summary

- 3.5.1 The statistical information presented in the first part of this section serves to illustrate the following key facts:

- older people and people with disabilities make up an increasingly significant proportion of society in Northern Ireland;
- the range of disabilities that people experience is wide, in both nature and severity, which impacts on the type of transport requirements they have and the transport opportunities available to them; and
- both older people and people with disabilities typically have low incomes which limits opportunities for personal mobility.

3.5.2 Analysis of this data, along with the information gathered during the period of initial consultation on the ATS, highlights that the most prominent barriers faced by older people and people with disabilities are:

- physical accessibility of both the built environment and the vehicles used to supply transport services;
- attitudes of both staff providing transport services and the general public;
- availability of relevant, up-to-date information in formats that people need and knowing where the appropriate information can be accessed; and
- affordability of transport services.

4. Components of an Accessible Transport System

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section explains the "whole of journey" approach and outlines the key components that make up an accessible transport system and how they contribute to the development of an accessible transport system.

4.2 Whole of journey approach

4.2.1 For many years the debate on developing an accessible transport system was dominated by issues about the physical characteristics of vehicles and whether these allowed people with disabilities (and in particular wheelchair users) to travel in them. An accessible transport system is more than this – it can be thought of as a series of linked transport systems and services. An accessible system involves barrier free access to:

- the pedestrian environment;
- the different modes of transport; and
- the highway network.

4.2.2 Most older people and people with disabilities will use all three parts of the system: either as car or public transport users, or as pedestrians, or users of Shopmobility services. A journey could involve using several of these modes in turn. Accessible transport needs to provide for "whole of journey" accessibility, including seamless transfers across modes of transport.

4.2.3 The development of "accessible transport chains" is a concept that acknowledges that any journey comprises several elements which link together to form an accessible transport chain (getting to a bus stop, waiting, getting on and off the bus, walking to your destination or getting another transport service and so on). A journey can only be undertaken under fully accessible conditions when information, infrastructure and services are accessible. Although these components can be made accessible independently they must also be addressed together in a systematic way.

- 4.2.4 To achieve full accessibility, a co-ordinated approach to transport service delivery is required. Furthermore, because the various components are inter-linked, the benefits of improving one part of the chain will not be fully realised unless all of the chain is improved at the same time. For example, the benefits of investing in fully accessible public transport vehicles should be supported by improvements to bus stop infrastructure, footways and perhaps improved enforcement to ensure that illegal parking does not prevent the bus from getting to the kerb.
- 4.2.5 Other factors influencing accessibility include operating procedures, training, driving skills and passenger assistance. If older people and people with disabilities are to have confidence in an accessible transport system it is imperative that services are reliable, that these services are delivered in a consistent way and that they provide the facilities and help which people have been told to expect. When things go wrong, as they sometimes do, there must be procedures in place to allow passengers to complete their journey without undue inconvenience.
- 4.2.6 A “whole of journey approach” and the development of “accessible transport chains” are at the heart of the development of an accessible transport network. While the prospects for an accessible transport future have been greatly enhanced through the introduction of accessibility regulations the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee points out²²:

“the design and specification of a vehicle is not the only factor in determining how far a service can be deemed to be fully accessible. Other issues that can render a service more or less accessible include: the way that a service is delivered (for example, the length of the journey, the ease with which bookings can be made, and so on); the way in which the vehicle is driven; the help and care given by drivers and assistants to passengers (and the way people are treated in general); the extent of training provided to drivers and assistants.”

4.3 Physical accessibility of vehicles

- 4.3.1 It is not possible to have an accessible transport system without vehicles that are accessible. Part V of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, enabled government to introduce accessibility regulations for new buses, coaches, taxis and trains. It is the policy in Northern Ireland to ensure that standards for the construction and use of

transport vehicles here maintain parity with Great Britain. This role of Northern Ireland departments such as DOE and DRD is to introduce legislation here that gives effect here to the standards developed by the Department for Transport in Great Britain.

- 4.3.2 Accessibility regulations are intended to ensure that people with disabilities can get on and off vehicles in safety and without unreasonable difficulty and, in the case of wheelchair users, to do so whilst remaining in their wheelchairs. They are also intended to ensure that people with disabilities are carried in safety and reasonable comfort. In Northern Ireland regulations have been introduced to set accessibility standards for buses, coaches²³ and for trains²⁴.
- 4.3.3 The regulations currently apply to large buses and coaches (over 22 seats) used on scheduled public transport services. The Department for Transport is working on accessibility standards that will apply to smaller buses (9-22 passenger seats).
- 4.3.4 The things covered by accessibility regulations include the provision of a dedicated wheelchair space, priority seating, the design of handrails, bell pushes/stop signs, step dimensions, floors, gangways, colour contrasts, location and signage of destination information.
- 4.3.5 The Department of the Environment, which has responsibility for taxi matters in Northern Ireland, is working closely with the Department for Transport, which is in the process of developing new accessibility standards for taxis. DOE intends to make accessibility regulations that will mirror the technical standards developed by the Department for Transport.
- 4.3.6 Effective enforcement of accessibility regulations is key. This strategy sets out actions DOE and DRD will carry out to ensure that the standards set out in the regulations are included in new vehicles brought into use in the transport system.

4.4 Information that is accessible

- 4.4.1 In order to meet the needs of travellers, information, in whatever format it is made available, should be clear, concise, accurate and timely.
- 4.4.2 'Clear' applies to both the legibility of information, whether printed, on a screen or a sign, and the ease with which information can be understood. Written information is generally easier for people to

understand when written in lower case, in a clear typeface and with a minimum font size of 14. Larger print should also be made available. Symbols are particularly useful because people with low levels of literacy can understand them, however they must be unambiguous and used in a consistent way.

- 4.4.3 General information about the type of transport services available, when and where they operate and fares is vitally important for all users, none more so than passengers with mobility difficulties.
- 4.4.4 Research carried out by the Department for Transport established that older people and people with disabilities need to plan their travel more than others because of particular access requirements. Many sources of transport information investigated by the ATS Team that were provided by public and private sectors and voluntary sector organisations were not up-to-date. This was the case for both printed and Internet based information sources. There is also no comprehensive source for travel information in Northern Ireland and a person who has particular access requirements or needs to use a number of types of transport to complete a journey may have to make several separate enquiries to establish whether it was possible to make a journey.
- 4.4.5 One possible solution is a “One Stop Shop” for travel information that could provide general travel advice such as travelling by public transport, community transport, door-to-door services, taxis, private operators, leisure travel, Shopmobility, concessionary fares, cross border travel and UK travel and issues around the car. Advice on how to plan a journey could help overcome some difficulties that older people and people with disabilities may have when using transport.
- 4.4.6 The facility could have one phone number for all Northern Ireland telephone enquiries together with text messaging capabilities for people with hearing impairments and a website for people who wanted to make enquiries that way. The service would know about local initiatives such as door-to-door and community transport services, travel “training”, or travel companion schemes. It could link with existing sources of information, such as the Translink call-centre, and with similar travel information services in Great Britain such as Tripscope. The Department will wish to examine the feasibility of several options to determine the best way forward for a more “joined up” approach to providing travel information.

4.5 Pedestrian environment

- 4.5.1 Virtually all journeys begin and end with a pedestrian link. For this reason “no matter how accessible transport its self may be, if the walking environment contains barriers to movement then the usability of transport services is largely negated”²⁵.
- 4.5.2 Good, barrier free design ensures that the pedestrian environment can be used older people and people with disabilities, and hence can facilitate the first, or last link in the transport chain. At crossing points the correct application and maintenance of dropped kerbs is vital as is the presence of tactile paving, which provides people with visual impairments with information about the crossing point.
- 4.5.3 Improvements to the pedestrian environment are the responsibility of DRD Road Service and are being achieved through implementation of the Northern Ireland Walking Action Plan. The Plan was developed in association with the Northern Ireland Walking Forum. This Plan, consisting of over 80 actions, has the concept of “Access for All” as an underlying principle. The needs of all pedestrians including older people and people with disabilities were considered fully when developing the Action Plan.
- 4.5.4 As part of the development of the Sub-Regional Transport Plan, DRD is carrying out a series of transport studies in the main urban areas outside Belfast. The studies will identify key walking networks in these towns. Building on this information, Roads Service will develop “Local Walking Plans” which include “Quality Walking Routes” (for example a route that connects the local bus station with the town centre). This approach to improving the pedestrian environment on a route-by-route basis will ensure that benefits are maximised for older people and people with disabilities.
- 4.5.5 Roads Service is currently working on guidance for its staff on the impact of the DDA on the management of the road network. As part of this work Roads Service will update its policies on parking provision for people with disabilities and standards for ramps and level access to premises from the public footways.
- 4.5.6 During the initial phase of consultation on the Accessible Transport Strategy people told us about problems they had with the layout of streets and pavements in the housing developments were they live. There is now a series of Planning Policies Statements²⁶ that should ensure that a more enlightened approach is taken in future.

4.6 Conventional bus services and facilities

- 4.6.1 Buses are an important transport service for older people and people with disabilities and a fully accessible bus network will make a major contribution to building an accessible transport system for Northern Ireland. Citybus and Ulsterbus provide almost all scheduled bus services in Northern Ireland. Bus services are available throughout Northern Ireland although the frequency of services varies considerably. Last year “Senior Smartpass” holders made 7.25 million journeys on Ulsterbus and Citybus services.
- 4.6.2 The Regional Transportation Strategy has set a target of 100% accessibility for all buses operated by Citybus and Ulsterbus by 2012 and the average age of buses to be no more than 8 years with no bus older than 18 years; in the case of Ulsterbus inter-urban coaches, no vehicle should be more than 12 years old. Achieving bus replacement targets will depend on the obtaining the necessary finance through normal budgetary processes, which take account of Government priorities and the spending needs of other Departments.
- 4.6.3 Effectively managing the transition to a fully accessible bus fleet is a key challenge. Translink’s approach is to improve the accessibility of its bus services on a route-by-route basis. This is vital because people with disabilities need to know that accessible vehicles will be available at all times when they travel on that route whenever it has been identified as accessible in timetable information.
- 4.6.4 Bus use has been in decline now for some years as more and more people use private cars to meet their mobility needs. At the same time there have been expectations that bus companies will continue to provide a wide range of transport services that will meet the needs of people without a car and deliver the accessibility standards that are required. The requirements of the DDA Accessibility Regulations mean that access standards are guaranteed for all new buses introduced into service. However, decreasing income from fares make it impossible to sustain the range of services currently provided. Furthermore, it is not possible or affordable to have a transportation system that can meet everyone’s needs at all times.
- 4.6.5 Translink has recently outlined a programme for change, which aims to revitalise bus services in Northern Ireland to ensure that better services are provided for more people and enable buses to achieve the performance targets set by the Regional Transportation Strategy. Key measures include:

- improved frequencies on inter-urban services and the replacement of the core fleet with state of the art, accessible, double deck coaches;
- a new simplified high frequency “Metro” network for Belfast which will be operated at all times by accessible low-floor vehicles. A network of socially necessary services operated less frequently supports the “Metro” network; and
- improvements to urban bus networks, which will be operated by fully accessible vehicles in the 30 “other urban areas” identified in the Regional Transport Strategy. Translink intends to provide town services in future using fully accessible low floor midi-buses and, where the situation demands, larger, fully accessible, low-floor vehicles. New vehicles are to be introduced over the next 2 –3 years. This is an extremely important development and represents a step change in the provision of accessible transport opportunities in these areas.

4.6.6 Roads Service and Translink are working together to establish a “Quality Bus Corridor” programme to complement the operation of high frequency accessible bus services on the Belfast “Metro” network. Quality Bus Corridors involve improving traffic management and providing bus lanes to make sure buses are able to run on time and better bus stops, shelters and service information for passengers. The Department is currently revising its “Bus Stop Design Guide” to ensure that best design practice is adopted to maximise the benefit of the increasing numbers of low-floor accessible buses that are entering service.

4.6.7 The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 acknowledges, “At present, there is little collective industry experience on operating coaches that are accessible for wheelchairs. Options for the provision of suitable vehicles are expected to become available as the industry throughout the UK moves to comply with the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations. The RSTN TP proposes therefore that all inter-urban bus and coach services should be accessible by 2015”.

4.6.8 The RSTN TP also notes that “the development of accessible inter-urban bus and coach services will involve providing supporting infrastructure either at existing bus stations or at key entry points and interchanges on the network”.

- 4.6.9 Translink has an ongoing programme to provide new bus stations and upgrade others. DRD has a contract with a private sector firm to provide 1,500 new bus shelters. The scheme covers practically all of Northern Ireland provides high quality shelters with seating and lighting to promote a better sense of personal security.

4.7 Trains and Stations

- 4.7.1 Most trains currently operated by Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) are more than 20 years old and while they are not compliant with Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2001 people who wish to travel in wheelchairs can use them. In 2004 and 2005, NIR will commission and introduce into service 23 new trains. When these trains are fully operational 70% of NIR trains will be fully compliant with Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations.
- 4.7.2 Other trains operated by NIR, while not meeting the Accessibility Regulations, are accessible to passengers with wheelchairs. The trains on the Belfast to Dublin Enterprise service (operated jointly by NIR and Irish Rail) were designed in consultation with organisations that represented people with disabilities. The Department will ensure that when these undergo substantial refurbishment they will be made compliant with the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations.
- 4.7.3 NIR has undertaken an access audit of all railways stations to identify the work that is needed to ensure compliance with Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act. It is now engaged in an ongoing programme of access improvements.
- 4.7.4 Translink has produced an access guide to bus and rail passenger facilities, which lists the access facilities for every bus, rail station and halt. The guide helps passengers to plan their journey, obtain details on wheelchair and mobility vehicles, buses and trains and view route maps. This guide will be updated to reflect the information on subsequent improvements to the infrastructure.

4.8 Taxi services

- 4.8.1 “Taxis provide an important service, often offering the only means of public transport in certain areas and at certain times of day, moreover taxis are an extremely important mode of transport for people with disabilities, as in some areas they offer the only accessible mode of transport.”²⁷

- 4.8.2 Generally consumers like using taxis because they can be pre-booked, are convenient and quick, offer a door-to-door service and are clean and comfortable. Conversely, people dislike having to wait or not being able to get a taxi when they want one, the cost, being overcharged, having to book ahead or the driver being unhelpful, rude or unfriendly.
- 4.8.3 Research undertaken by the Department of the Environment in February 2003 indicated that many people with disabilities who use taxis do not own a car (87%), this represented 16% of the respondents to the sample survey.
- 4.8.4 There are around 7,000 licensed taxis operating in Northern Ireland. A wide range of vehicles is used, some of which are reasonably accessible. While many purpose built taxis are designed to meet the needs of passengers who use a wheelchair or those with a visual impairment, some people with disabilities find these vehicles difficult to get into because of the need to step up and bend down simultaneously.
- 4.8.5 Although taxis form an important link in the transport chain, some evidence suggests that older people and people with disabilities face barriers in their use. A frequently reported barrier is that some drivers are unwilling or unable to take a passenger with a disability and would rather carry a non-disabled passenger who is unlikely to need assistance. There is also some evidence that people with disabilities are charged higher than average taxi fares.
- 4.8.6 DRD's Ports and Public Transport Division is currently exploring the possibility of piloting a taxi card scheme, which would provide people with disabilities with subsidised journeys in accessible taxis.
- 4.8.7 In November 2002, the DOE announced a review of the legislation regulating the taxi industry in Northern Ireland. The review is considering measures aimed at increasing the availability of accessible taxi services and improving service standards and customer protection for all taxi customers, including older people and people with disabilities. The ATS Team worked closely with the officials in DOE who developed these proposals. Comments received during the ATS consultation process have been shared with DOE and have been taken into account by the Review Team in its assessment of the problems surrounding taxi accessibility and in developing measures to address these problems.

- 4.8.8 Public consultation on the proposals for the reform of taxi regulation began in March 2005 and the issues about the of accessibility of vehicles and services are comprehensively addressed in Section 5 of DOE's document²⁸

4.9 Private coach operators

- 4.9.1 There are currently 130 independent coach operators across Northern Ireland employing 2000 staff which provide transport for schools, tourists, community groups, older people and people with disabilities.
- 4.9.2 Independent operators play a significant role in providing regular contract and occasional hire bus services but provides less than 10% of scheduled public transport market. The sector is dominated by smaller vehicles (less than 22 seats) and by coaches. For the moment they are largely unaffected by DDA Accessibility Regulations.
- 4.9.3 The Northern Ireland Independent Coach Operators Association, which represents many of Northern Ireland's independent coach operators, has been working to improve the quality of bus services provided by its members and training standards within those organisations.
- 4.9.4 It is thought that new business opportunities through DRD's door-to-door transport initiative will encourage greater involvement in the accessible transport market and, perhaps, greater investment in accessible vehicles by the sector.

4.10 Community Transport

- 4.10.1 Community transport is the term given to transport services that are provided on a not-for-profit basis by voluntary or community groups often using minibuses and volunteer car schemes.
- 4.10.2 There are estimated to be around 1,300 minibuses in use by the community transport sector in Northern Ireland. Although many minibuses are used solely to provide transport for members of organisations such as sports clubs or churches, some voluntary organisations make them available on a wider basis. The Community Transport Association lists about 50 such organisations in urban and rural areas. While people who are wheelchair users can use minibuses if they are fitted with a platform lift or ramp, minibuses

often have steep steps so access is difficult for some older people and people with disabilities.

- 4.10.3 DRD provides grants to community transport organisations under the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities and the Rural Transport Fund (RTF). The introduction of the RTF in 1998 led to significant growth in the community transport sector. DRD's approach is to encourage the development of Rural Community Transport Partnerships (RCTPs), which are set up and managed by volunteers on a non-profit basis, in response to local awareness of or experience of transport need. The Partnerships take many different forms reflecting their local nature. RCTPs employ some full time staff to develop and manage the organisations' transport initiatives and to provide transport services. They also encourage volunteers to use their own cars as part of social car schemes or to drive minibuses to provide low cost transport for individuals or groups of people. The RTF now supports 18 RCTPs and their operations cover all of rural Northern Ireland. Financial support for the RTF is projected to increase from £1.8M in 2003/04 to £3.75M in 2005/06.
- 4.10.4 Rural Community Transport Partnerships have effectively become the primary source of accessible transport for many older people and people with disabilities living in rural areas whose essential travel needs would otherwise remain unmet leaving them excluded from activities that many people take for granted. Appendix C provides details of the operational areas of RCTPs and a summary of the services they provide.
- 4.10.5 Community Transport Association UK is the national representative body for not-for-profit passenger transport operators in the UK. CTA is the UK's biggest provider of training, advice and information on accessible, voluntary and community transport provision and is in the forefront of work to promote minibus safety and accessibility standards. CTA receives a grant from DRD to operate an advice and information service for the sector here. Its local office coordinates and provides an extensive training programme and other technical support to develop the skills, competence and confidence of CT staff, volunteers, and for groups with an interest in community transport. One highlight of the programme has been the development of driver training under the MiDAS scheme (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme). At the end of 2004 some 2000 people had received MiDAS training.

4.11 Demand Responsive Transport

- 4.11.1 There are many different types of Demand Responsive Transport. The common factor is that passengers have to pre-book journeys. Some services operate on a pre-determined route but only operate when there is a booking. Others, like Translink's "Newcastle Rural Rover" service, operate on a "semi-fixed route" basis, the bus moves away from its route to pick up or drop off by prior arrangement. In some cases a bus might begin and end at a pre-determined place but the route it takes depends on where passengers need picked up or set down.
- 4.11.2 The Regional Transport Strategy suggested that DRD should try out Demand Responsive Transport to establish the cost and benefits of having these types of services in Northern Ireland. These services would complement other rural transport services provided by Ulsterbus and by Rural Community Transport Partnerships. DRD intends to initiate some pilot services later this year.
- 4.11.3 DRD will ensure that the particular needs of older people and people with disabilities are taken into account in the design of these pilot schemes. This is in keeping with the RTS commitment to building in accessibility for people with disabilities as a condition of new public transport investment.

4.12 Door-to-Door Services

- 4.12.1 This is a form of Demand Responsive Transport currently provided in some parts of Belfast and Derry for people who find it difficult or impossible to use conventional public transport. Accessible minibuses provide a pre-booked service and fares are similar to the cost to make a similar journey by public transport.
- 4.12.2 DRD wants to ensure that door-to-door services are more widely available to people who find it impossible or very difficult to use conventional public transport services. In May 2004 the Department issued a consultation paper on "Extending Door-to-Door Transport Services Across Northern Ireland" about its proposals to extend these services to urban areas with a population of over 10,000 persons. The Department subsequently published a further paper in January 2005 outlining its decisions about how the services would operate. It is now finalising the Terms of Reference and Operational Requirements for door-to-door services, and hopes that the first new services will be operational in the summer 2005 following tendering

procedures. This approach complements services provided under the Rural Transport Fund in smaller urban areas with less than 10,000 people and in rural areas. Appendix D provides further information on this initiative.

4.13 Shopmobility

- 4.13.1 Shopmobility schemes aim to promote equality of access and encourage the independence of people with disabilities by providing mobility equipment such as scooters and power chairs to enable them to shop and to visit leisure and commercial facilities within the town or shopping centre.
- 4.13.2 Most schemes have a membership system and Shopmobility staff provide training on the equipment that they hire. Some schemes also provide help and advice on mobility issues or provide practical support through volunteer escort schemes. The National Federation of Shopmobility, which supports and develops Shopmobility schemes, lists 11 schemes in Northern Ireland in its current directory.
- 4.13.3 DRD has developed a new funding framework for schemes in liaison with The Community Fund, Shopmobility Lisburn and Shopmobility Belfast. The Department has released details of a new grant programme to support the development of Shopmobility throughout the Region. The Department intends to make grants to help with the running costs of schemes that allow access to commercial areas in towns and/or city centres and which do not restrict use of the mobility equipment to particular shopping centres. The Department believes that around 14 schemes may make funding applications.
- 4.13.4 Shopmobility schemes make an important contribution to an accessible transport network but more work is need to connect these schemes with other transport services such as community and public transport services. DRD wishes to support a Regional Shopmobility Group, to provide a support network for Shopmobility schemes, and would like to encourage the development of more schemes throughout Northern Ireland. The Regional Group might explore issues such introducing a “Shopmobility passport”, which would enable the holder to use any Shopmobility service affiliated to the NI Forum; developing “buddy” or travel escort schemes as an integral part of their service; and partnership arrangements with community transport and with door-to-door providers to encourage greater use of the services by people who do not have access to a car.

4.14 Better co-ordination of transport services

Working together

- 4.14.1 There are a number of excellent examples of cooperation between transport providers that are helping to share knowledge about the particular transport requirements of older people and people with disabilities and good practice in the design of vehicles and services. The CTA and the Northern Ireland Independent Coach Operators Association have recently established a partnership agreement about working together to deliver complementary services to the wider community and those people who are socially disadvantaged by providing accessible and good quality transport services. Under the agreement, CTA and NIICOA will encourage collaborative working, share best practice and policies, develop an understanding of the different ethos and priorities of the two sectors and encourage operators to explore ways of managing joint projects.
- 4.14.2 Translink works closely with Rural Community Transport Partnerships and district managers are involved with the Partnerships that operate in their areas. Under a unique arrangement, the Rural Transport Fund provides a grant to Translink to purchase accessible minibuses which are then leased back to Partnerships; Translink maintains and insures the vehicles as part of the leasing agreement. CTA, Translink and DRD worked together to specify the design of these vehicles.
- 4.14.3 A number of CT partnerships now provide services for members that enable them to link with other accessible public transport opportunities and with Shopmobility schemes. The introduction of new accessible trains on the Bangor to Belfast line has seen an increase in the numbers of people using community transport to get them to the railway station.
- 4.14.4 The Northern Ireland Transport Advisory Committee has a membership that comprised transport operators, policy makers and people with disabilities. NITAC provides a useful forum for transport operators to share ideas and to develop joint working practices.
- 4.14.5 Many people have suggested that there is potential to better utilise transport resources owned by Education and Library Boards and Health Care Trusts. This is a complex area and there are many operational, legal and financial barriers to using these vehicles. The Northern Ireland Audit Office will publish a report on a Review of

Education and Health and Social Services Transport in April 2005 and it is anticipated that the agencies involved will be committed to review some operational arrangements as a consequence.

Education and Library Board vehicles

- 4.14.6 In Northern Ireland school transport is largely provided by public transport services, which account for approximately 60% of home-school journeys. The use of education board vehicles accounts for almost a third of journeys, with the remainder being provided by contracted vehicles, taxis and allowances.

Health Care Transport Services

- 4.14.7 Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts can contract with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service for non-emergency transport but also have the flexibility to maintain their own transport fleets or commission transport services from the private, voluntary and community sectors.
- 4.14.8 The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is developing a comprehensive regional management framework for the provision of transport services, which will meet the needs of non-emergency health service patients and social services clients. DHSSPS intends to issue a draft Strategy for public consultation in March 2005 and publish the final Strategy and implementation plan later in the year. Apart from operational arrangements, the Strategy will consider the need to review the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme to take account of changes to how hospital services will be delivered in future, and the current policy and legislation on charging for transport services.

4.15 Private car travel

- 4.15.1 A wide range of help is available from Government and other Agencies for people with disabilities who use cars.

The Blue Badge Scheme

- 4.15.2 The purpose of the Blue Badge Scheme is to give people with disabilities the opportunity to park on street, close to the facilities and services they need. Blue Badge holders may park on single yellow line waiting restrictions and without charge in on-street pay and

display bays (in Belfast). DRD Roads Service administers the scheme.

- 4.15.3 Perhaps the most contentious issue for people with disabilities, which was highlighted during consultation, was the abuse of parking bays provided for Blue Badge holders by other motorists. The lack of parking opportunities due to illegal parking or the abuse of blue badge parking was mentioned at most public meetings during both ATS consultation phases.
- 4.15.4 At present, on-street parking contraventions are criminal offences and are enforced by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), mainly through the Traffic Warden Service. DRD has formulated proposals for the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement which involve its Roads Service taking responsibility for the enforcement of certain road traffic contraventions. The primary objectives in introducing DPE are to reduce traffic congestion impacts and improve highway and pedestrian safety by reducing incidences of illegally parked vehicles.
- 4.15.5 On 1st March 2005, DRD published a draft Traffic Management (Northern Ireland) Order for public consultation. The purpose of this draft Order is to provide DRD with the necessary powers to introduce the civil enforcement system. The draft Order has provisions for:
- the decriminalisation of most on-street parking and waiting restrictions and off-street parking restrictions;
 - the enforcement of relevant waiting restrictions by DRD;
 - the immobilisation and removal of vehicles for enforcement and debt recovery purposes;
 - the use of technology to help with enforcement; and
 - appeals and debt recovery procedures.
- 4.15.6 The draft Order will ensure that the existing enforcement powers relating to Blue Badges can be exercised by DRD's parking attendants. Other provisions in relation to Blue Badge matters deal with:
- exempting a vehicle displaying a current Blue Badge from immobilisation;

- creating an offence of "failing without reasonable excuse to produce a badge when required to do so by a constable or a traffic attendant";
- recognition of badges issued in other parts of the United Kingdom, other EU Member States and certain other European and non-European countries; and
- the wrongful use of Blue Badges.

- 4.15.7 The Department believes that the DPE scheme will improve the effectiveness of parking enforcement generally and will improve the operation of the Blue Badge Scheme. It is hoped that the new legislation will be made later this year with operational arrangements for DPE in place by mid 2006.
- 4.15.8 It is important to have an effective system of enforcement to deter abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme and the parking facilities provided for people with disabilities. Other complimentary initiatives can serve to increase awareness of how bad parking behaviour can compromise access for older people and people with disabilities. The Department is supportive of the "Baywatch" campaign, which has raised public awareness about the problems and implications of the abuse parking bays provided for people with disabilities. Baywatch is an UK wide campaign, which has successfully won support from a number of large retail chains that have taken steps to deter abuse of parking bays provided at their shopping centres. DRD hopes that with its support the Disabled Drivers Association and NI Transport Advisory Committee will promote the Baywatch campaign in Northern Ireland.

Car parks and parking

- 4.15.9 DRD Roads Service ensures that consideration is given to people with disabilities when designing new off-street car parks. These policies also apply to the Department's maintenance of existing off-street car parks. Consideration is given to issues such as the width of parking bays, the height of pay and display machines and the number of spaces provided for Blue Badge holders. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving are provided in the immediate vicinity of spaces reserved for Blue Badge holders.
- 4.15.10 Parking bays for people with disabilities are provided in car parks where possible and located close to access points. In pay and

display off-street car parks, at least one ticket machine is located close to the parking bays provided for people with disabilities.

Vehicle Excise Duty Exemption

- 4.15.11 People who meet certain conditions, for example those in receipt of either the higher rate of the Motability component of Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners Supplement, can apply for exemption from Vehicle Excise Duty ("Road Tax"). Any charitable organisation or anyone carrying people with a disability can apply for Disabled Passenger Tax class.

Motability

- 4.15.12 Motability is an independent charity set up in the 1970s as a unique partnership between the Government, charitable and private sectors to help disabled people become mobile by offering contract hire or hire purchase facilities on cars and wheelchairs. Any person who receives of the higher rate of Disability Living Allowance mobility component or War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement is entitled to use the Motability service. They do not need to drive themselves – someone else can drive for them.

Road Safety

- 4.15.13 The Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland notes that:

"A greater percentage of elderly people, than previously, are drivers and wish to continue driving longer. The mileage driven by elderly people is also expected to increase over the next decade, therefore, a greater proportion of the driving population will be elderly drivers".

- 4.15.14 The Road Safety Strategy points out that there is a need to develop appropriate measures to enhance the safety of older drivers in Northern Ireland because "the types of road traffic collisions that elderly people have differ from those experienced by other age groups. Older drivers are more likely to be involved in collisions in complex traffic scenarios and multiple-vehicle collisions at intersections."

Northern Ireland Mobility Centre

- 4.15.15 The Northern Ireland Mobility Centre, which is run by Disability Action, is a fully accredited member of the UK Forum of Mobility

Centres the only centre of its kind in Northern Ireland. The Mobility Centre is committed to promoting independence to people with disabilities by offering advice and information on all aspects of personal mobility. The Mobility Centre provides:

- a driving assessment facility; and
- a driving school for people with disabilities.

4.15.16 In 2003/04 the Centre carried out 530 driving assessments were conducted on behalf of the Driving Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI). Over the same period the Centre provided 800 driving lessons.

4.15.17 DVLNI refers approximately 15% of people with “medically renewed” licenses to the Mobility Centre each year. As the Northern Ireland’s population gets older, more people are being referred and more are being recommended not to drive (rising from 5% to 14% of referrals in the last 5 years).

4.15.18 The Northern Ireland Mobility Centre is currently supported by DOE in the form of an annual grant to Disability Action to assist in meeting the cost of driver assessments and maintenance of infrastructure. DVLNI contributes to the cost of driver referrals and assessments.

4.16 Concessionary Fares

4.16.1 People who are eligible for the NI Concessionary Fare Scheme get a concessionary fare on all scheduled bus and rail services, throughout Northern Ireland at any time of day. It is the Department’s main instrument for making transport more affordable for older people and people with disabilities. DRD pays the transport operator for the concession given to the passenger.

4.16.2 For many older people and people with disabilities the Concessionary Fare Scheme makes the public transport system more affordable and, therefore, more accessible. The scheme costs around £11M annually to provide travel concessions for older people and people with disabilities.

4.16.3 People over 65, people who get a war-disabled pension and those who are “registered blind” are entitled to free travel. As at 31 March 2004 there were 168,819 “Senior”, 1270 “Blind”, and 1,203 “War Disabled” passes issued.

- 4.16.4 In April 2004 the scheme was extended to provide half-fare travel for 4 new groups: people who receive either mobility component of Disability Living Allowance; people who are partially sighted; people who have a learning disability; and people who have been refused a driving licence on medical grounds. As at 31 August 2004 there were 5,800 concessionary passes issued to the groups listed above. Around 90% of these were issued on the basis of eligibility for either mobility component of Disability Living Allowance.
- 4.16.5 DRD has been pressed to extend the scope of the scheme to other groups and other modes of transport. In its Equality Impact Assessment on the NI Concessionary Fare Scheme the Department indicated that there are no plans to further extend the scheme due to resource constraints. Nevertheless, because of the major changes to the scheme in recent years, DRD intends to undertake a review of its operation within the next 2 years and such issues will be considered at that time.

4.17 Air and Sea travel

- 4.17.1 Air and Sea travel are excluded from the scope of the Accessible Transport Strategy. NI Government Departments do not have any control in their regulation, nor any control over the accessibility of their destinations. During the initial round of consultation on the strategy many people asked what was being done to improve accessibility for older people and people with disabilities. The Department for Transport takes forward work in these areas on a UK-wide basis in collaboration with the aviation and shipping industries and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. Further details of this work and links to codes of practices for the industries can be found on Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee Internet site <http://www.dpttac.gov.uk>
- 4.17.2 The Northern Ireland Transport Advisory Committee has at the companies request, worked with Stena and Seacat in relation to the accessibility of vessels. NITAC has a representative on a DPTAC working group which is undertaking a review of ferry routes to examine their compliance with voluntary codes of practice.
- 4.17.3 Air and Sea passenger terminals are covered by Part III of the DDA and their owners are expected to have made reasonable adjustments to provide for the requirements of passengers with disabilities.

- 4.17.4 NITAC intends to revisit some earlier work contained in its reports “Across the Water” and “Access to the Skies” in light of new guidance produced by the Department for Transport and DPTAC.

Ferry Services Supported by DRD

- 4.17.5 While the ATS is primarily about land-based transportation it is appropriate to mention the Strangford and Rathlin ferry services within the scope of the ATS since these are an integral part of the Region’s transport system.
- 4.17.6 Roads Service operates the Strangford ferry, which provides ferry service between Strangford and Portaferry. The Department’s policy is to provide travel concessions to passengers on the same basis as the NI Concessionary Fare Scheme. A travel concession can be obtained by showing a valid Concessionary Fare Pass.
- 4.17.7 The Rathlin Ferry service operates between Ballycastle and Rathlin Island. It is regarded, as “lifeline” ferry link for the resident population of 80 people living on Rathlin. DRD provides financial support for the ferry service, which is operated by Caledonian MacBrayne. Although the ferry service does not come within the scope of the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fare scheme the Department ensures that older people and people with disabilities receive travel concessions on the ferry on the same basis.
- 4.17.8 Caledonian MacBrayne has recently established a working group to review arrangements with a view to improving access and facilities for people with disabilities across all its operations (the company also provides a number of ferry services in Scotland).

5. The ATS Action Plan

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section outlines the Department's Vision for accessible transport in Northern Ireland and the Strategic Objectives, which have been developed to help achieve that Vision. This section contains an Action plan that outlines the ATS policies and actions, which are, associated each of the Strategic Objectives.
- 5.1.2 Implementation of the ATS will be achieved principally through a number of key initiatives identified in the RTS which are included in Transport Plans as well as other spending programmes such as the Rural Transport Fund, the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities and the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fare Scheme. Some initiatives involve changes to administrative processes or the introduction of new legislation such as the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order and further regulations about the accessibility standards for transport vehicles.
- 5.1.3 The ATS is being developed within the context of the Regional Transport Strategy and the levels of expenditure highlighted by the RTS. Achieving an accessible transport system will depend among other things on the availability of public funds to implement particular initiatives and maintain existing commitments, including the provision of frequent transport services for all users.
- 5.1.4 The draft ATS includes 7 Strategic Objectives and a range of supporting policies that will be followed to assist in achieving those objectives. For example the ATS includes policies on the evaluation of accessible transport initiatives and about consultation on the detailed implementation of access features incorporated in new transportation infrastructure. Those responsible for implementing Transport Plans and for managing other transportation spending programmes will have regard to the ATS Strategic Objectives and policies when carrying out this work.

5.2 Vision for Accessible Transport in Northern Ireland

- 5.2.1 The vision of an accessible transport future and strategic objectives and policies were formulated in light of the initial round of public consultation and a review of existing literature and best practice. The

ATS strategic objectives and policies will guide those involved in making the transition to an accessible transport system.

5.2.2 The ATS vision is:

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

5.2.3 DRD which has developed the ATS proposes to manage the transition to an accessible transport system effectively through the following broad principles:

Being proactive in our efforts to identify and remove barriers that prevent older people and people with disabilities accessing the transport system and make sure that no future barriers are created;

Working in partnership with public, private, community and statutory transport providers to improve transport services, make them easy to use and easy to understand so that people can be confident about using them;

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

Good consultation, working openly and in partnership with people who provide transportation services and facilities and those that use them. We will maintain good communication with older people and people with disabilities to listen to their views and inform them about what we are doing to create an accessible transportation system; and

Value for money, targeting the resources available at initiatives that are affordable and sustainable, that maximise the benefits for older people and people with disabilities and offer best value for money.

5.3 Working with older people and people with disabilities

5.3.1 It is important that the views of older people and people with disabilities continue to be heard as the ATS progresses. The main source of advice for DRD is the Northern Ireland Transport Advisory Committee (NITAC), which receives financial support from the Department.

- 5.3.2 NITAC has been in existence since 1991 and Disability Action provides its Secretariat. Committee members include people with disabilities and people with specific expertise in transport and disability. Over half of the current membership of the TAC is people with disabilities.
- 5.3.3 NITAC's work includes:
- advising Government and other bodies;
 - gathering and distributing information;
 - responding to consultation documents;
 - monitoring and commissioning research;
 - encouraging good practice and innovation; and
 - challenging negative attitudes to people with disabilities.
- 5.3.4 NITAC has established 4 working groups to help it to carry out its work programme. A Public Transport Working Group deals with issues around public transport, including buses, trains, coaches, taxis, community transport and sea and air travel. A Personal Mobility Group looks at issues around car travel, pedestrian issues and Shopmobility. The Information Group is seeking to improve the quality of information as well as promoting accessibility improvements that are being made to the transport system. NITAC has established a Marketing Group to develop its communications strategy, to reach out to other groups and organisations and to promote its work.
- 5.3.5 The Department has sought to clarify and strengthen the role of NITAC in the ATS. Policy 3 in the Action plan confirms the Department's intent to "Continue to support the Northern Ireland Transport Advisory Committee to enable it to be a main source of independent advice to service providers and departments on all transport matters that affect the mobility of older people and people with disabilities". Actions P03A01 to P03A07 provide a framework of NITAC's activities including obligations to publish an annual work programme (following consultation with DRD and others) and to provide an annual report to the Minister.
- 5.3.6 There is much work to be done to put policies into practice at operational level. Engagement with older people and people with disabilities is vital to ensure a clear understanding of the issues that

need to be addressed and NITAC has a fundamental role to play in providing advice and helping DRD implement the ATS Action Plan.

- 5.3.7 The Department is conscious that one of the functions of the Equality Commission is to ensure compliance with disability rights legislation, including those provisions affecting transport. The General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland has also a statutory remit to represent the interests of all passengers, including older people and people with disabilities travelling to, from or within Northern Ireland. We would wish to see NITAC establishing strong links with these organisations

5.4 Strategic Objectives

- 5.4.1 The ATS strategic objectives were developed following an analysis of the current transport situation, a review of best practice in accessible transport and from the feedback that was received during public consultation on developing the ATS. These Strategic Objectives are linked closely to the ‘themes’ that DRD set out in its “Issues Paper” about developing the ATS which were used to guide discussions at public meetings.

- 5.4.2 The ATS Strategic Objectives are:

Strategic Objective 1 (SO1):

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

Strategic Objective 2 (SO2):

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

Strategic Objective 3 (SO3):

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

Strategic Objective 4 (SO4):

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

Strategic Objective 5 (SO5):

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

Strategic Objective 6 (SO6):

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

Strategic Objective 7 (SO7):

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

5.5 Action Plan

- 5.5.1 The Action plan that follows outlines the ATS policies and actions, which are, associated each of the Strategic Objectives.
- 5.5.2 These actions have been established through analysis of the ‘gaps’, which became apparent during the review of the current transport situation, discussions with other organisations and negotiations on what it will be possible to achieve within the timescale of the ATS. For each action the ‘key players’ have been listed and an indication of the timescale for implementation given.

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SO1 To manage effectively the transition to a fully accessible transport network in partnership with key stakeholders to maximise the benefits for older people and people with disabilities

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P01	Ensure, where appropriate, that any legislative changes at National level which impact on people with disabilities' right of access to transport services or to the accessibility standards for transport vehicles are incorporated in Northern Ireland legislation in parallel with changes in GB		
P01A01	Introduce legislation to extend Part III of the DDA to transport services in Northern Ireland to maintain parity with Great Britain.	OFMDFM	0-2
P01A02	Develop a Code of Practice to assist providers of transport services in Northern Ireland to meet new duties under Part III of the DDA.	OFMDFM MIU ECNI	0-2
P01A03	Require trains undergoing substantial refurbishment to be made compliant with Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations.	PPTD	0-2
P01A04	Set an end date by which all trains must comply with DDA Accessibility Regulations.	PPTD	0-2
P01A05	Bring into force in Northern Ireland law The Private Hire (Carriage of Guide Dogs etc.) Act 2002.	DOE	0-2
P01A06	Introduce Accessibility Regulations that will apply to small buses (9-22 passenger seats inclusive) at the same time as this is being done in GB.	DOE	3-5 years

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P02	Enforce effectively any Accessibility Regulations that apply to new buses, coaches, taxis and trains.		
P02A01	Carry out a review of enforcement procedures relating to Accessibility Regulations with regard to relevant public transport vehicles (including Belfast Public Hire taxis).	DOE	0-2
P02A02	Establish a certification and civil enforcement regime for Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations.	PPTD	0-2
P02A03	Examine opportunities for vehicle inspection procedures and licensing procedures to provide data about the introduction of new accessible vehicles in N. Ireland.	DOE	0-2
P03	Continue to support the Northern Ireland Transport Advisory Committee to enable it to be a main source of independent advice to service providers and departments on all transport matters that affect the mobility of older people and people with disabilities		
P03A01	Continue to explore options for establishing NITAC as an independent entity and implement the preferred option.	MIU NITAC	1
P03A02	Establish procedures in consultation with NITAC for recruiting members of the committee and its Chair to ensure that there is an appropriate balance in terms of community background, gender, age and geographical origin of its members, subject to the proviso that at least half of its membership will comprise people	MIU NITAC	0-2

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
	with disabilities.		
P03A03	Enhance the skills and expertise of the NITAC and remove barriers to participation by identifying and providing appropriate training and support.	NITAC	Ongoing
P03A04	Following consultation with Government departments and others, as it considers appropriate, NITAC will, in February each year, prepare and publish an annual work programme detailing such transport matters that affect older people and people with disabilities as the committee think appropriate.	NITAC MIU	Annually
P03A05	Establish a communication strategy and consultation mechanisms to involve a wide range of older people and people with disabilities and their representative organisations in the work areas of NITAC.	NITAC	0-2
P03A06	Hold 6 meetings of NITAC each year of which 3 will be in locations outside Belfast. Older people and people with disabilities will be encouraged to attend these meetings.	NITAC	Ongoing
P03A07	Submit to the Minister responsible for DRD in June each year a report for the previous year (April to March) setting out NITAC's achievements and advice to the Minister on transport matters that affect older people and people with disabilities as the committee think appropriate.	NITAC	Annually
P04	Consult with older people and people with disabilities and their representative organisations at an early stage in the development of new transport policies and projects and on the detailed implementation of access features incorporated in new transport infrastructure.		

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P04A01	Policy 4 to be followed when developing new transport opportunities and facilities that are available to the public generally but particularly to projects that are specifically designed for older people and people with disabilities. And to the following: Transport Programme for People with Disabilities; the Rural Transport Fund; and implementation of RTS initiatives such as Demand Responsive Transport, Urban Bus Networks and Small Vehicle fixed route services.	DRD DOE Translink	Ongoing
P04A02	Consult with the CTA about vehicle design, service co-ordination, better information provision, training standards etc. in relation to CT operations.	PPTD CTA	Ongoing
P05	Work closely with the Department for Transport, the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly and the Irish Department of Transport as they develop standards and good practice.		
P05A01	Establish clear channels of communication between the Department, DfT, the Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly and the Irish Department of Transport on issues relating to accessible transport for older people and people with disabilities.	MIU	0-2
P05A02	Keep under review policy, standards and good practice guidance produced in Great Britain, Europe and elsewhere and consider whether/how these can most effectively be implemented in Northern Ireland.	MIU NITAC	Ongoing
P05A03	Distribute publications on policy, standards and good practice in accessible transport to the relevant departments, groups and organisations in Northern Ireland.	MIU NITAC	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P06	Provide appropriate, accredited, disability awareness and diversity training for staff involved in work that impacts on the accessibility of the transport system for older people and people with disabilities.		
P06A01	Investigate suitable training programmes for DRD staff.	MIU	1
P06A02	Disability awareness and diversity training will be provided for all staff involved in the design or delivery of transport services or facilities provided for older people and people with disabilities.	Translink DRD CTA	0-2
P06A03	Produce an advisory leaflet about training standards in meeting the needs of older people and people with disabilities.	NITAC	0-2
P07	Key considerations for the evaluation of accessible transport initiatives will include: affordability, the number of people who will benefit, the extent to which they will benefit and whether they would otherwise be denied access to transport.		
P07A01	<p>Policy 7 to be applied to the following grant programmes: Transport Programme for People with Disabilities; the Rural Transport Fund; Bus Challenge; and implementation of RTS initiatives such as Demand Responsive Transport, Urban Bus Networks and Small Vehicle fixed route services.</p> <p>Translink will apply the policy when making decisions about prioritising the upgrading bus routes to provide full accessibility and deploying accessible vehicles.</p>	DRD Translink	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P08	Improve the factual base about the extent of the transport needs of older people and people with disabilities to ensure evidence-based development of policies and programmes.		
P08A01	Work with the NI Transport Advisory Committee to identify priorities for research about the particular transport requirements of older people and people with disabilities, including attitudes towards the transport system.	MIU NITAC	1
P08A02	Review the NITAC "Access to the Skies" report in light of new Department for Transport Guidance.	NITAC	0-2
P08A03	Review the NITAC "Across the Water" report in light of new guidance from DPTAC.	NITAC	0-2
P09	Ensure that there is effective communication of the Accessible Transport Strategy and understanding of the issues by key partners.		
P09A01	Provide training seminars to raise awareness of the Accessible Transport Strategy and distribute information about the strategy.	MIU	0-2
P09A02	Work with the ATS "Project Reference Group" to ensure that their network of contacts know about and are kept informed about the ATS.	MIU	1

SO2 Ensure that Disability Discrimination Act requirements are met and affordable adjustments are made so that accessibility for people with disabilities is a condition of public money being spent on all new public transport investment.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P10	Ensure that best practice in accessible design is followed when providing new public transport infrastructure.		
P10A01	Require proposals for any new bus stations or for major refurbishment of bus stations to demonstrate how these provide for the requirements of older people and people with disabilities by meeting best practice in accessible design.	PPTD Translink	Ongoing
P10A02	Require proposals for new rail stations to have regard to the design standards produced by the Strategic Rail Authority.	PPTD Translink	Ongoing
P10A03	Specify high standards of accessibility based on best practice experience in any contracts let in relation to the construction of rapid transit systems.	RPTD	Unknown
P10A04	Update the Department's "Guide to the design of bus stops and waiting facilities" (which will support the development of QBCs and be a source of reference for developers, planners and Roads Service staff).	R.S. MIU Translink	0-2
P11	Promote the use of accessible vehicles on public transport and "alternative" transport services that are supported financially by Government.		

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P11A01	Policy 11 about promoting the use of accessible vehicles applies generally to all public, private and community transport services that DRD supports through bus grants and spending programmes such as the Rural Transport Fund and the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities; and the implementation of RTS initiatives such as Demand Responsive Transport, Urban Bus Networks and Small Vehicle fixed route services.	PPTD	Ongoing
P11A02	Disseminate guidance on the design of small buses (9-22 seats) to public, private, community and statutory sector transport providers.	MIU CTA	0-2

The following policies that support other Strategic Objectives are also relevant to Strategic Objective 2

- P04 Consult with older people and people with disabilities and their representative organisations at an early stage in the development of new transport policies and projects and on the detailed implementation of access features incorporated in new transport infrastructure.
- P06 Provide appropriate, accredited, disability equality and disability awareness training for staff involved in work that impacts on the accessibility of the transport system for older people and people with disabilities.
- P12 Ensure that the pedestrian and traffic environments are designed and managed in a way that enables older people and people with disabilities to move around safely and with confidence.
- P13 Improve access to public bus and rail services to maximise their use by older people and people with disabilities to reduce the need for alternative transport systems.
- P28 Ensure that all information provided about transport services that are financially supported by Government is made available in formats that are appropriate to the particular needs of older people and people with disabilities.

SO3 To develop, in partnership with key stakeholders, an integrated, fully accessible public transport system which will enable older people and people with disabilities to travel by bus, train, taxi, private and community transport services in safety and in comfort and move easily between these modes.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P12	Ensure that the pedestrian and traffic environments are designed and managed in a way that enables older people and people with disabilities to move around safely and with confidence.		
P12A01	Identify walk networks as part of the work on Local Transport Studies carried out in urban areas outside Belfast.	R.S.	0-2
P12A02	Develop "Local Walking Plans" for major towns and cities.	R.S.	0-2
P12A03	Develop a Best Practice guide for design of the pedestrian environment.	R.S.	0-2
P12A04	Develop guidance for Roads Service staff on the impact of the DDA on the management of the road network and update policies on parking provision for people with disabilities and standards for ramps and level access to premises from the public footways.	R.S.	0-2
P12A05	Provide a grant system under the TPPD to support existing Shopmobility schemes and establish new schemes to enable people with mobility impairment to more easily access the pedestrian environment in urban areas.	PPTD	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P13	Improve access to public bus and rail services to maximise their use by older people and people with disabilities to reduce the need for alternative transport systems.		
P13A01	Introduce into the operation 292 new buses that are fully compliant with the PSV Accessibility Regulations.	Translink	0-2
P13A02	Introduce into operation 23 new trains that are fully compliant with the Rail Vehicles Accessibility Regulations.	Translink	0-2
P13A03	Improve traffic management and bus stop infrastructure in “other urban areas” to support the RTS initiative to provide better urban bus services.	R.S.	0-5
P13A04	Develop and deliver Quality Bus Corridors to support the operation of high frequency, accessible bus services on the Belfast “Metro” network ensuring that the requirement of older people and people with disabilities are considered.	R.S. MIU Translink	Ongoing
P13A05	To further investigate “grounding” problems that low-floor buses have in some rural areas and take remedial action where appropriate.	Translink R.S.	Ongoing
P13A06	Implement a review programme aimed at improving the siting of bus stops and identify opportunities for providing hard standings at rural bus stops.	Translink R.S.	Ongoing
P13A07	Improve signage and pedestrian access to bus and rail stations.	R.S. Translink	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P13A08	Ensure that any new park and ride facilities follow best practice in their design to meet the requirements of older people and people with disabilities.	R.S.	Ongoing
P14	Support alternative means of transport at reasonable fares for those people who cannot or find it difficult to use the public bus and rail network and ensure that these services provide their users with opportunities to access business, education, recreational, shopping and health care facilities.		
P14A01	Provide financial support to operate door-to-door transport services for people who are unable to use conventional public transport services in urban areas.	PPTD	0-2
P14A02	Provide financial support to operate door-to-door services for people living in rural areas through Rural Community Transport Partnerships and new demand responsive services.	PPTD	Ongoing
P15	Develop a community transport sector that advocates a strong volunteering ethos and adopts best practice in the management and operation of their transport initiatives which focus on providing transport services for people, communities and groups that experience mobility impairment.		
P15A01	Provide an information and advice service for voluntary and community based transport providers.	CTA	Ongoing
P15A02	Improve the skills base of the community transport sector through an annual training programme covering best practice in the management and operation of community based transport schemes.	CTA	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P15A03	Support the operation of 18 Rural Community Transport Partnerships to enable them to provide accessible transport opportunities for people living in rural areas that experience mobility impairment.	PPTD	Ongoing
P15A04	Support the development of more social car schemes with the support of CT Partnerships and advice services provided by CTA.	PPTD CT P'ship CTA	0-2
P15A05	Promote the MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) and PATS (Passenger Assistance Training Scheme) as minimum training standards for CT Schemes supported by DRD.	PPTD CTA	Ongoing
P16	Ensure that a higher proportion of public hire taxis are accessible, allowing more older people and people with disabilities the same opportunities, at the same cost, to travel as those without a mobility impairment.		
P16A01	Establish a revised framework for regulation of taxis in Northern Ireland that will address the supply of accessible taxis, vehicle standards and driver training.	DOE	0-2
P16A02	Support the inclusion of measures in the proposed Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order making it illegal for taxi and other transport operators to treat disabled people less favourably, including by charging more for a service.	DOE	Ongoing
P16A03	Replicate, as soon as possible, new DDA taxi accessibility regulations currently being developed by DfT for England and Wales where these are expected to be phased in over 10 years beginning in 2010.	DOE	1-5 years

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P17	Ensure that new development in the built environment properly addresses the transport needs of older people and people with disabilities in their design.		
P17A01	Ensure that the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users have been properly addressed in proposals by developers. (Roads Service to review developers' "Transport Assessments").	DOE R.S.	Ongoing
P17A02	Ensure that planning policy contained in "PPS3 - Access Movement and Parking", "PPS13 - Transportation and Land Use" and guidance contained in Development Control Advice Note 11 are being followed by developers.	DOE	Ongoing
P17A03	Carry out Local Transport Studies to assist in the production of Development Plans. Studies include basic accessibility analysis for walking, cycling, public transport and cars (the methodology approach will take account of the needs of people that experience mobility impairment).	R.S.	0-2
P18	Encourage a partnership approach between older people, people with disabilities and public, private, community and statutory transport providers to ensure that each sector can build on the experience of others in the delivery of accessible transport services.		
P18A01	Encourage the transfer of knowledge and exchange of information about best practice in relation to accessibility between providers of public, private hire, voluntary and community and statutory bodies that provide transport.	NITAC MIU Translink	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
		NIICOA CTA	
P18A02	Promote training opportunities that will assist people and organisations outside the CT sector to provide better quality, accessible transport services that are responsive to the requirements of older people and people with disabilities.	CTA	Ongoing
P18A03	Implement and evaluate a number of varied Demand Responsive pilot projects in selected rural areas throughout Northern Ireland.	PPTD	0-2
P19	Exploit opportunities for better co-ordination of services and utilisation of accessible transport resources that exist in the public, private, community and statutory transport sectors to maximise opportunities to develop accessible transport chains and maintain consistent quality standards.		
P19A01	Promote co-ordination and collaboration between health, social services, education, community and public transport services.	DHSSPS DE MIU	0-2
P19A02	Provide a Guide, which outlines examples of co-ordinated services.	CTA	1
P19A03	Support a Regional Shopmobility Group, which will provide a network for assisting the development and better co-ordination between Shopmobility schemes throughout Northern Ireland.	PPTD SNI	Ongoing

SO4 To enable older people and people with disabilities to travel safely using cars and other means of private transport.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P20	Provide parking concessions for people with disabilities through the Blue Badge scheme.		
P20A01	Regularly review and update publicity leaflets and other information provided to applicants and holders about the operation of the Blue Badge scheme and ensure that these are available in a range of accessible formats.	R.S.	Ongoing
P21	Ensure that adequate parking is provided for Blue Badge holders in convenient locations, to enable easy access to activities and facilities.		
P21A01	Review the adequacy of parking provision for people with disabilities in car parks owned by DRD and improve where appropriate.	R.S.	Ongoing
P21A02	Review the provision of parking bays provided for people with disabilities in all towns.	R.S.	Ongoing
P21A03	The Department, Police and disability groups will work together to ensure the Blue Badge scheme operated by DRD is enforced effectively within allocated resources and consistent with other responsibilities.	MIU PSNI Vol Sec	Ongoing
P22	Continue support for the Northern Ireland Mobility Centre to enable it to carry out driving assessments and assist people with disabilities to develop their driving skills.		

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P22A01	Provide an efficient driver assessment service and driving school for people with disabilities through the NI Mobility Centre.	DA	Ongoing
P22A02	Examine ways to make the NI Mobility Centre services more widely available throughout Northern Ireland.	MIU DA	0-2
P23	Develop appropriate measures to enhance the safety of older drivers in Northern Ireland.		
P23A01	Assess the outcome of the DfT review on older drivers in Great Britain and progress, where appropriate proposals for improving the safety of older drivers in Northern Ireland.	DOE	Ongoing
P23A02	Through the traffic education support teams continue to develop and provide an effective education and intervention strategy for older drivers who may have particular difficulties and requirements.	PSNI	Ongoing

SO5 To address attitudinal and psychological barriers that prevent or discourage older people and people with disabilities from using transport services and facilities that are available to them.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Year
P24	Raise awareness amongst transport providers and general public of the needs of older people and people with disabilities when using transport.		
P24A01	Work with NITAC to identify key topics and produce fact sheets.	MIU NITAC	0-2
P24A02	Raise awareness amongst the general public of the needs of older people and people with disabilities when using public transport.	Translink MIU NITAC	Ongoing
P25	Promote independent mobility by raising awareness among older people and people with disabilities about the accessible transport opportunities available to them and provide help and support to address the concerns they may have about using these services.		
P25A01	Develop a cross-sectoral approach to make “travel training” programmes more widely available for people with learning disabilities.	MIU	0-2
P25A02	Conduct a public information campaign about accessible transport opportunities aimed at older people and people with disabilities and their representative organisations.	MIU NITAC Translink	0-2

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Year
		CTA	
P25A03	Further develop passenger assistance programmes based on good practice initiatives piloted in Armagh and Dungannon.	CT P'ship	0-2
P25A04	Incorporate best practice in the design of bus and rail stations to improve personal security and reduce fear of crime for passengers.	Translink	Ongoing
P25A05	Use CCTV on public transport vehicles to deter crime and vandalism.	Translink	Ongoing
P25A06	Provide advice for passengers about personal security on public transport.	Translink	0-2
P25A07	Conduct a public information campaign to discourage attacks on public transport vehicles and raise awareness of the problem.	Translink	Ongoing
P25A08	Encourage more schools to take part in the "Bee Safe" bus campaign which aims to tackle problem behaviour of pupils on buses.	Translink	Ongoing
P25A09	Formulate strategies for making pedestrians in town centres safer from assaults.	PSNI DCs TCMs	Ongoing
P26	Deter car users from driving and parking in a manner that compromises access to the transport system for older people and people with disabilities.		
P26A01	Enforce parking and waiting restrictions within allocated resources, and consistent with other responsibilities.	PSNI	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Year
P26A02	Introduce new legislation for the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement to reduce traffic congestion impacts and improve highway and pedestrian safety by reducing incidences of illegally parked vehicles.	R.S.	1
P26A03	Support and organise a "Baywatch" campaign aimed at raising public awareness about the problems that result from the abuse of parking bays provided for people with disabilities.	NITAC DDA MIU	0-2

SO6 To ensure that information in a range of formats is available for all public transport services, including the full range of accessible services supported by the Department, to enable people to plan and make journeys easily.

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
P27	Adopt best practice in the design of all information produced about transportation policies, initiatives and other guidance material and disseminate guidance about good practice in information design to transport providers.		
P27A01	Work with the Northern Ireland Transport Advisory Committee and other specialist organisations to identify and disseminate best practice in all means of communicating transport information.	MIU NITAC	Ongoing
P27A02	Examine the practicalities of introducing audio and visual announcements of travel information on buses.	Translink MIU	0-2
P28	Ensure that all information provided about transport services that are financially supported by Government is made available in formats that are appropriate to the particular needs of older people and people with disabilities.		
P28A01	Transport service providers will provide DRD with copies of all information issued about services that are financially supported by DRD.	Translink NIICOA CTA	Ongoing

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
		MIU	
P29	Ensure that information systems are put in place to support the development of accessible transport chains.		
P29A01	Work with the NI Transport Advisory committee to identify audiences for using wheelchairs on public transport and distribute copies of the DfT report “Wheels within Wheels”.	MIU TAC	0-2
P29A02	Produce an accessible guide to using the transport system for people with learning disabilities.	MIU Vol Sec	1
P29A03	Provide better information about accessible public transport opportunities and passenger support services provided by Translink for older people and people with disabilities.	Translink	1
P29A04	Investigate possibilities to get timetable information by text messaging to assist people with a hearing impairment.	Translink	0-2
P29A05	CT partnerships will routinely collect information about accessible transport opportunities in their area and make this available / promote these opportunities to the communities they serve.	CT P’ship	Ongoing
P29A06	Review and republish the series of “Out and About” factsheets and ensure these are made widely available.	NITAC	1
P29A07	Examine the feasibility of establishing a ‘One Stop Shop’ providing a range of	MIU	1

Ref	Policies and Actions	Who	Years
	specific travel advice on public transport, community transport, door-to-door, taxis, private operators, leisure travel, shop mobility and concessionary fares.	NITAC	
P29A08	Review and update the Access Guide to bus and rail passenger facilities.	Translink	0-2
P29A09	Continue to provide a Web based “Guide to Accessible Transport in Northern Ireland” at http://www.ni-transportguide.info	PPTD	Ongoing

S07 To provide help with travel costs to enable older people and people with disabilities to use the transport services available to them.

Ref	Policy and actions	Who	Years
P30	Provide a range of travel concessions for older people and people with disabilities through the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fare Scheme.		
P30A01	Review the operation of the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fare Scheme.	PPTD	0-2
P30A02	Explore the possibility of piloting of a taxi card scheme.	PPTD	0-2
P31	Explore opportunities for improving existing Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety travel and transport schemes.		
P31A01	Review the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme to take account of changes to how hospital services will be delivered in the future.	DHSSPS	0-2
P31A02	Review current policy and legislation on charging for health related transport services.	DHSSPS	0-2
P32	Provide practical assistance with travel to help people with disabilities to access training and job opportunities.		
P32A01	Raise awareness of the range of measures provided by Department of Employment and Learning in the 'Access to Work Programme'.	DEL	Ongoing

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6. Proposed funding and affordability of the Strategy

- 6.1.1 The Accessible Transport Strategy is being developed within the context of the Regional Transport Strategy 2002-2012 and the levels of expenditure highlighted by the RTS. The Accessible Transport Strategy will, however, go beyond this period to 2015. This provides a more realistic timescale in which to achieve its Strategic Objectives. By adopting such a timescale, the ATS will also be consistent with the emerging Transport Plans.
- 6.1.2 Implementation of the ATS will be achieved principally through a number of key initiatives identified in the RTS and other spending programmes such as the Rural Transport Fund, the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities and the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fare Scheme. Many of the Actions identified in Section 5 involve changes to administrative processes or the introduction of new legislation; these will be accommodated within existing Departmental running costs.
- 6.1.3 Achieving an accessible transport system will depend among other things on the availability of public funds to implement particular initiatives and maintain existing commitments, including the provision of frequent transport services for all users. The level of public expenditure for the Strategy will be determined through the normal budgetary process which will take account of the financial needs of other Departments and decisions on priorities. In addition, commitments to implement major infrastructure schemes cannot be given until appropriate economic and other relevant assessments have been considered, and statutory procedures (which may result in Public Inquiries) have been satisfactorily concluded.
- 6.1.4 The table below identifies the main RTS initiatives that impact on the delivery of the Accessible Transport Strategy. The costs of these initiatives, at 2002 prices, have been extrapolated to cover the period of the ATS. The figures provided are indicative and are subject to change in the light of the emerging Transport Plans. Some do not relate exclusively to the ATS. For example, the £12.2 m for access improvements at rail stations will provide improvements for all users including

measures to improve access for older people and people with disabilities.

Proposed Regional Transportation Strategy Funding which impact on the Accessible Transportation Strategy

	Proposed RTS Funding (£m) 2002 to 2012	Extrapolated RTS Funding (£m) 2002 to 2015
ALL MODES		
Research, monitoring and review	10.0	13.0
WALK/CYCLE		
Making it easier to walk	27.0	35.1
Improved accessibility	5.7	7.4
RAIL		
Concessionary fares	18.5	24.1
Access improvements at/to rail stations	9.4	12.2
Refurbishment of rail stations	6.3	8.2
HIGHWAYS (Cars, Buses, Taxis)		
Improved travel information	11.6	15.1
Enhanced facilities for taxis	0.5	0.7
Car Parking	5.0	6.5
BUS		
Enhanced facilities for buses	5.3	6.9
Concessionary fares	145.5	189.2
Bus replacement programme	145.5	189.2
Public transport information	10.0	13.0
Transport Programme for People with Disabilities	12.0	15.6
Refurbishment of Ulsterbus stations	9.1	11.8
Bus stop and access facilities on QBCs	13.5	17.6
Inter urban bus frequency increases	10.0	13.0
Access improvements at Ulsterbus stations	3.4	4.4
Additional bus services within towns	30.4	39.5
Rural Transport Fund	18.0	23.4
Demand responsive transport services	31.5	41.0
New 'small' vehicle fixed route services	4.7	6.1
Total	438.9	570.7

7. Implementation, monitoring and review of the ATS

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The implementation of the ATS will start to bring significant benefits to people with disabilities and older people. This section sets out arrangements for the implementation monitoring and review of the Accessible Transport Strategy.

7.2 Implementation arrangements

7.2.1 The Department has established a Mobility and Inclusion Unit (MIU) to “champion” the ATS. This initiative recognises that mainstreaming accessibility can be more effectively achieved when there is a ready source of help and advice for people developing policies and programmes - to help them fine-tune and accommodate issues that they might be unaware of.

7.2.2 A key role for the MIU would be to “champion” change, encourage mainstreaming and articulate the requirements of the client group in the wider transport policy arena. It would also track policy developments and good practice initiatives and in doing so maintain close links with counterparts in GB.

7.2.3 The Action plan has indicated a MIU lead where appropriate to help clarify areas of responsibility. But an MIU cannot stand alone simply to deal with those things that fall outside the scope of existing programmes and keep tabs on developments elsewhere. In order to effectively implement the ATS, those responsible for Transport Plans and for managing other transportation spending programmes will seek to ensure that the ATS objectives and policies are being addressed in their areas of work.

7.3 Monitoring progress

7.3.1 The Regional Transport Strategy Steering Group will have responsibility for monitoring progress on the ATS. The Department’s Mobility and Inclusion Unit will provide quarterly updates on progress for the Steering Group.

7.4 Review of the Strategy

- 7.4.1 In Section 5 of this document the proposed Strategic Objectives and Policies have been set out along with an Action Plan. Regular review is needed if the Strategy is to remain appropriate over time to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan and to propose new actions to continue progress towards the Strategic Objectives. The success of the ATS will be determined by the extent to which its policies and actions are implemented.
- 7.4.2 As the ATS is being developed within the context of the Regional Transport Strategy, any review of the RTS will also have to take account of how implementation of the ATS is progressing. While the Department monitors and reviews the implementation and progress of the RTS on a regular basis, it plans to undertake a formal mid-term review linking to the preparation of bids in the Government Spending Review 2006. Any change to the RTS as a result of the mid-term review will have to be taken into account in the ATS.
- 7.4.3 It is proposed to review and update the ATS Action Plan every 2 years. New Action Plans will be developed in a timely manner to cover subsequent years of the Strategy. Development of subsequent Action Plans will be informed by the lessons learned from the implementation of the previous Action Plans and will be subject to public consultation and relevant impact assessments.

7.5 The planning cycle and Government spending

- 7.5.1 Government spending plans are reviewed annually through the Northern Ireland Budget and every two years through the Spending Review, which determines the Northern Ireland block budget. The outcome Budgets may result in adjustments to ATS Action Plans as the resources available from the public purse are clarified and confirmed.

7.6 Involving older people and people with disabilities

- 7.6.1 It is important that the views of older people and people with disabilities continue to be heard as the ATS progresses. The main source of advice for DRD is the Northern Ireland Transport Advisory Committee DRD will continue to work closely with the NITAC, older people and people with

disabilities and representative organisations over the period of the ATS. NITAC will make an important contribution in areas such as the identification and dissemination of best practice, providing advice on transport policies and projects and on the detailed implementation of access features incorporated in new transport infrastructure.

8. Appendices

Appendix A: Statistics

A1. Age related statistics.

Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates (by gender and 5 year age bands) showing population aged 60 +, 2003				
Age Group	Males	Females	Persons	% of total population
60-64	37,800	40,400	78,200	4.59%
65-69	31,700	35,700	67,500	3.96%
70-74	25,700	32,700	58,400	3.43%
75-79	19,300	28,200	47,500	2.79%
80-84	12,100	21,100	33,200	1.95%
85-89	4,800	11,200	16,000	0.94%
90+	1,700	5,800	7,500	0.44%
Total	133,100	175,100	308,200	18.10%

A2. Prevalence of disability in Northern Ireland.

Summary Table of different sources of data available on the prevalence of disability in Northern Ireland.					
Source	Area	Age range	Most recent data	Total Estimate*	% of N.I. Population
PPRU Northern Ireland Disability Study	NI	All ages	1990	215,600	13.7%
Census 2001	NI	All ages	2001	343,000	20%
Continuous Household Survey	NI	16+		322,000	25%
Health & Social Well-being Survey (Disability Module)	NI	16+		360,000	28%
Labour Force Survey	NI	16-64	2003	184,000	18%
	UK	16-64	2003	169,000	17%
	UK	16-64	2003	205,000	20%
Omnibus Survey (Disability Module)	NI	16+	2001	270,000	21%
All population estimates are based on 2001 Census data with the exception of PPRU Northern Ireland Disability Study					
Source: Review of Disability Information Project for DFP NISRA, April 2004					

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

ATS	Accessible Transport Strategy
CTA	Community Transport Association
CT P'ship	Community Transport Partnerships
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DA	Disability Action
DC's	District Councils
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DETR	Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DfT	Department for Transport
DFP	Department for Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DOE	Department of the Environment
DPTAC	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DVLNI	Driver Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECMT	European Conference of Ministers of Transport
ECNI	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment
MIU	Mobility and Inclusion Unit
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NIICOA	Northern Ireland Independent Coach Operators Association
NIR	Northern Ireland Railways
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NITAC	Northern Ireland Transport Advisory Committee
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

PPTD	Ports and Public Transport Division
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RCTPs	Rural Community Transport Partnerships
RDS	Regional Development Strategy
RPTD	Regional Planning and Transportation Division
RS	Roads Service
RTF	Rural Transport Fund
RTS	Regional Transportation Strategy
SNI	Shopmobility Northern Ireland
TCM's	Town Centre Managers
TPPD	Transport Programme for People with Disabilities
TSN	Targeting Social Need
Vol Sec	Voluntary Sector

Appendix C: Community Transport Organisations

Map ref	Organisation	Location	Phone	Type of Service		
				Group Travel	Door to door	Social car scheme
18	ACTS	Newcastle, Co Down	028 4372 5734	Y	Y	Y
14	ART	Armagh, Co Armagh	028 3751 8151	Y	Y	Y
	BRIDGE	Derry, Co Londonderry	028 7126 7555	Y	Y	
4	CART	Kilrea, Co Londonderry	028 2954 1957	Y	Y	Y
9	CRCT	Cookstown, Co. Tyrone	028 8676 7766	Y	Y	Y
15	DART	Lurgan, Co Down	028 3831 7810	Y	Y	
	Disability Action	Belfast, Co Down	028 9029 7880	Y	Y	
16	DCT	Downpatrick, Co Down	028 4461 7900	Y	Y	
9	DDCT	Dungannon, Co Tyrone	028 8772 9714	Y	Y	Y
2	Easilift	Strabane, Co Tyrone	028 7188 3282	Y	Y	Y
12	FAST	Irvinestown, Co Fermanagh	028 6862 8484	Y	Y	Y
2	Foyle Connect	Killaloo, Co Londonderry	028 7133 8749	Y	Y	Y

Map ref	Organisation	Location	Phone	Type of Service		
				Group Travel	Door to door	Social car scheme
8	MTACT	Carrickmore Co. Tyrone	028 8076 0740	Y	Y	Y
5	NACT	Ballycastle, Co. Antrim	028 2076 8960	Y	Y	Y
6	Out & About	Magherafelt, Co Londonderry	028 7930 0123	Y	Y	Y
10	PACT	Kircubbin, Co Down	028 4273 9153	Y	Y	Y
3	Roe Valley	Limavady, Co Londonderry	028 7776 9160	Y	Y	
11	Rural Lift	Belcoo, Co Fermanagh	028 6638 6427	Y	Y	Y
7	SACT	Doagh, Co Antrim	028 9334 2455	Y	Y	

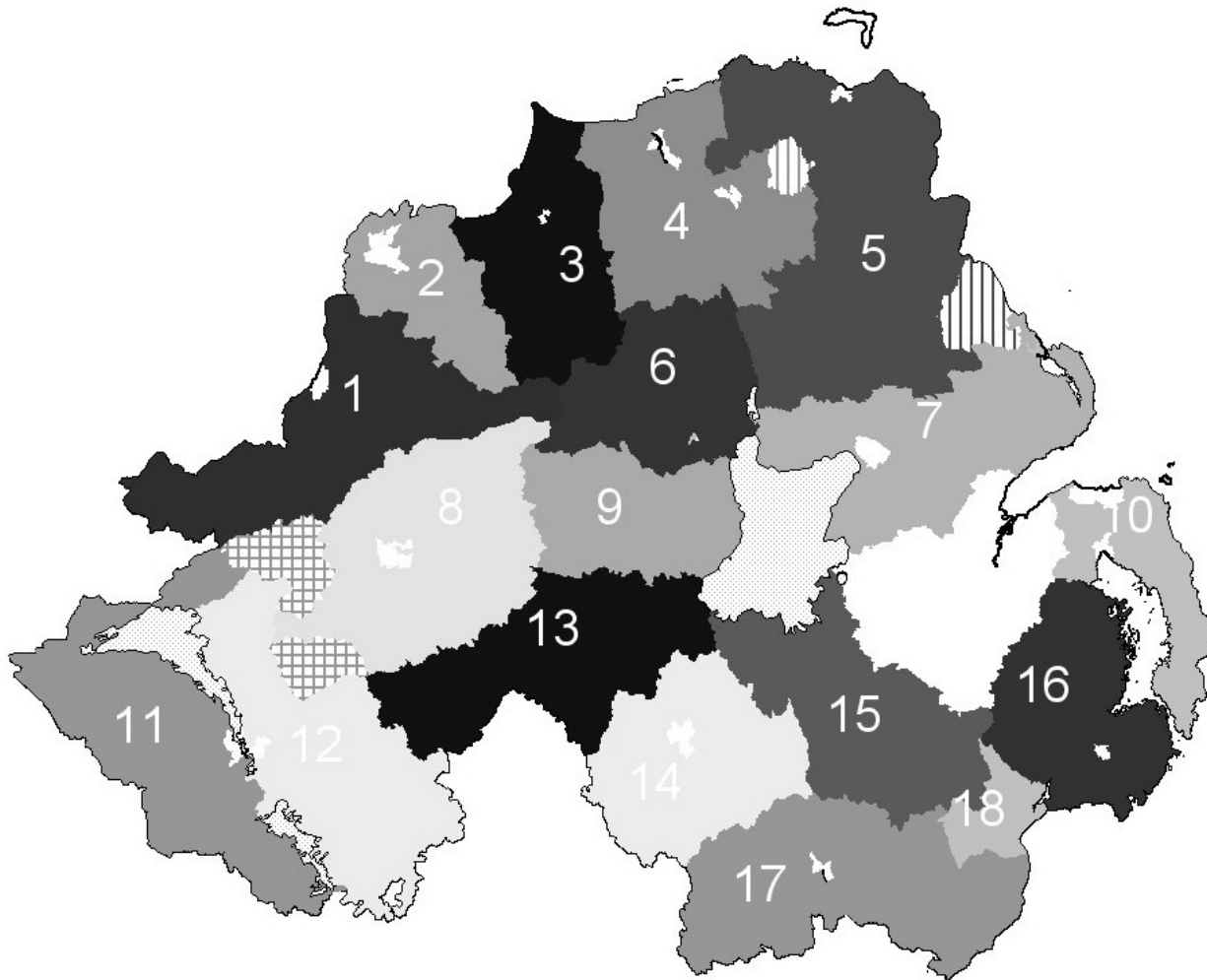
Definitions

Group Travel: This involves collecting a member group (a school club, for example) from one or more pick-up-points taking them to one destination and bringing them back.

Door-to-door: This involves a minibus calling at the member's home, taking them to their desired destination and bringing them home again.

Social car scheme: Volunteer drivers provide this service using their own cars, also on a door-to-door basis. This is most commonly used for essential journeys, such as taking members from their homes to medical appointments.

Rural Community Transport Partnerships



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Appendix D: Door-to-door services in larger urban areas.

- The Transport Programme for People with Disabilities (TPPD) will establish arrangements to provide door-to-door transport services for people with disabilities living in urban areas throughout Northern Ireland.
- The services will be used primarily by people who have a disability and find it very difficult or impossible to use conventional public transport.
- They will fulfill a function similar to conventional town bus services by enabling people to get to and from their home to local facilities and services.
- The Department will establish a membership scheme for people who are eligible to use these services.
- The services will be provided under contract by licensed transport operators.
- The Department will set high standards in its contracts to ensure that the service is provided with appropriate vehicles and well-trained drivers.
- The Department proposes that the following urban areas (with populations of 10,000 people or more) are provided with door-to-door services.

Antrim	Larne
Armagh	Limavady
Ballymena	Lisburn & Dunmurry
Banbridge	Newry
Bangor & Holywood	Newtownabbey & Carrickfergus (including Greenisland)
Coleraine & Ballymoney	Newtownards, Comber & Dundonald
Cookstown	Omagh
Downpatrick	Portadown, Lurgan & Craigavon (
Dungannon	Strabane
Enniskillen	

- Belfast and Londonderry are not listed above as door-to-door services are already provided there. The Department intends to further develop door-to-door in both cities in 2005/06.

- It is anticipated that the new services will begin in the late Spring or early Summer of 2005.

Appendix E: Bibliography

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