

To:
Stephen Wood
DRD Roads Service

From:
Tom Wilson
Freight Transport Association

Belfast - 22 June 2006

Response to the Sub-Regional Transport Plan.

See AM
22/6/06

Freight delivery and collection.

The prime concern of the FTA membership is their ability to deliver and collect freight within town centres with the minimum amount of delay and with reasonable uninterrupted access/egress to and from these locations.

Deliveries and collections are generally made during daylight hours at times suitable to business owners and in consideration of pedestrian and vehicular traffic volumes. It is therefore important that the consultation takes account of the needs of both the business owner and the freight transport company when any change is being considered which might affect these parties.

A good example of this practice and means of communication in recent years was through *Freight Quality Partnerships* which were established for Belfast City and other major towns and cities in the UK.

Review of Public Administration

It has been reported that as part of the RPA consideration is underway to transfer the responsibility for 93% of the Northern Ireland Roads network over to the new super councils with effect from May 2009.

This is viewed as a major setback which would be detrimental to the viability and sustainability of the NI economy.

There are several reasons for this statement:

1. Uncertainty about the deliverance of all the measures contained in the Sub-Regional Transport Plan, following any transfer of budgetary control for roads to the super councils.
2. The model of efficiency, consistency and economy of scale demonstrated through the well established Roads Service Direct body is a shining example of how the NI Roads network should be managed. It is the envy of both GB and the ROI. Quite simply the NI economy can not afford the huge additional costs required to introduce and maintain the proposed system.
3. The new super councils will initially have no expertise in Roads management from within their resource pool.
4. The management of annual budgets by the super councils may be influenced by particular demands within each area therefore the annual spend on roads would inevitably vary across the province leading to inconsistency of standards and severe deterioration of one of our major resources – the roads network.
5. The significant and punitive cuts by Government to the Roads Service maintenance budget is a clear message that they can not afford to be foolhardy by incurring additional unnecessary cost through making changes to the Roads Service structure as we know it at present.