



Public Consultation Draft

Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS 4)

Industry, Business and Distribution

Public Consultation Draft



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Environment

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Preamble

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

The Department has a statutory duty, laid down in Article 3 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, to formulate and co-ordinate policy for securing the orderly and consistent development of land and the planning of that development. The Department's planning policies are normally issued through Planning Policy Statements and PPS 1 'General Principles' advises that:

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

This Planning Policy Statement, PPS 4 'Industry, Business and Distribution' sets out the Department's planning policies for industrial development and other defined business uses and indicates how economic and employment growth associated with such uses can be accommodated and promoted in development plans. It seeks to facilitate and accommodate economic growth in ways compatible with social and environmental objectives and sustainable development.

The Statement applies to development proposals for industry, including research and development into industrial products and processes, storage and distribution, Class 3 'Business' as currently defined in the Planning (Use Classes) Order (Northern Ireland) 1989 (as amended) and Class 2 'Financial, professional and other services' as defined in the same Order. It does not apply to proposals for retail or retail service uses, leisure or tourism, agriculture, waste disposal or waste management facilities, or minerals development.

When issued in final form, this PPS will replace PPS 4 'Industrial Development' and the following policies of 'A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland':

Policy IC 16: Office Development

Policy IC 17: Small Office and Business Development

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

1.0 Policy Context

Introduction

1.1 The Northern Ireland economy has performed well over the last decade, and it is one of the fastest-improving regions in the United Kingdom, measured against a range of economic indicators. However, in spite of good progress, the region still has a low-wage economy overdependent on a number of declining or slow-moving industries and on the public sector. This is recognised as an unsustainable position because of technological change, increased globalisation and the contribution now made to the economy by the non-manufacturing sector.

1.2 A key concern for government, therefore, is to restructure the region's economy from a low-wage, low-value added to a high-wage, high-value added, knowledge-based economy which can meet the challenges of a highly competitive, global environment.

1.3 The Government considers it essential to create a vibrant economy, to produce employment and wealth for the future, if a cohesive, inclusive and just society is to be achieved. Economic development is important in order to raise the quality of life for the people of Northern Ireland, through increasing economic opportunities for all, on a socially and environmentally sustainable basis.

1.4 The planning system has a key role to play in achieving a vibrant economy. It seeks to promote economic development through supportive planning policies, zoning land for development, identifying and protecting development opportunities and integrating employment generation with essential supporting provision in terms of housing and infrastructure.

1.5 This PPS seeks to facilitate the economic development needs of the region in ways consistent with the protection of the environment. Such safeguarding of the environment, and the fostering of a 'clean, green image', can provide economic advantages and employment in itself in terms of the promotion of, for example, tourism, recreation, agri-food and quality of life attractions.

1.6 The PPS has been formulated within the context of the strategic policies and advice contained in the Economic Development Strategy (Strategy 2010), the Regional Development Strategy, the Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement, 'Moving Forward' and the Regional Transportation Strategy.

Economic Development Strategy

1.7 The Economic Development Strategy (Strategy 2010), published by the Department for Economic Development in March 1999, sets out the following vision for the region:

“A fast growing, competitive, innovative, knowledge based economy where there are plentiful opportunities and a population equipped to grasp them”.

It recognises the need to integrate a range of industrial development policies, including inward investment, research and development (R&D), enterprise and the Information Age Initiative, to promote the innovation capacity to achieve this vision.

Regional Development Strategy

1.8 The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 (RDS), published by the Department for Regional Development in September 2001, provides a strategic spatial planning framework for Northern Ireland and guides physical development in the region up to 2025. It seeks to promote a balanced distribution of development which will facilitate economic growth and competitiveness, complementing Strategy 2010 and distributing the benefits of economic opportunity throughout the region.

1.9 The RDS provides an overarching strategic framework for the preparation of planning policy and development plans. The framework provides the basis for the strengthening of the regional economy, for the reduction of social disadvantage and for the planning of future development in a sustainable way.

1.10 The Strategy seeks to ensure that a network of economic opportunities is provided, with development plans making provision for a generous and continuous supply of land for employment purposes. It facilitates a spread of economic opportunities across the region, identifying a strategic network of hubs, corridors and gateways as the focus for economic activity and development opportunities. There is a strong commitment in the Strategy to the reinvigoration of town centres, ‘brownfield’ initiatives and the principle of mixed-use development.

1.11 Great importance is placed on the identified regional gateways as suitable locations for major economic development, freight distribution activities and additional employment generation. The promotion and exploitation of the potential for economic development at selected locations on the key transport corridors will involve creating and maintaining a regional portfolio of Strategic Employment Locations, facilitating the clustering of engineering and high technology office type businesses, and locating transport dependent industries in the corridors at well accessed nodes normally on the edge of towns.

1.12 While economic development opportunities will be focused on the cities and the urban hubs/clusters, the RDS seeks to facilitate the development of rural industries, businesses and enterprises in appropriate locations and of appropriate nature and scale, and to ensure they are satisfactorily integrated with the settlement or rural landscape.

Transportation Policy

1.13 The Northern Ireland Transport Policy Statement 'Moving Forward', published by the Department of the Environment in November 1998, was an important step in developing a new transport strategy for the region. It contains a commitment to greater integration of transport with land use planning in order to support more sustainable transport choices and reduce the need to travel. The Statement encourages development to be sited where there is a choice of transport and the location is not dependent predominantly on access by car. Decisions on the location of economic development, therefore, should take account of access to services and the overall need to reduce travel.

1.14 The Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002-2012 (RTS) published in July 2002 is an integral part of the Regional Development Strategy and identifies the transportation priorities and associated funding issues for the next decade. It is the purpose of the RTS to support the RDS and to move over a 10-year period towards the achievement of its longer-term transportation vision:

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

1.15 To ensure further consistency between the RDS, the RTS and development plans, the Department of Regional Development is currently preparing a strategic Planning Policy Statement, PPS 13, on Transportation and Land Use to provide strategic policy guidance and advice relating to the integration of transportation and land use. This is in order that the transport network can further its contribution to the achievement of sustainable progress on social, economic and development goals in Northern Ireland. The guidance will place greater emphasis on the integration of planning and transportation policies and practices to help deliver the transportation vision.

New Targeting Social Need

1.16 The Department is committed to implementing the New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) Initiative, which aims to direct efforts and available resources towards those objectively assessed as being in social need. As part of this Initiative, it will be important to ensure that disadvantaged groups and communities are able to benefit from better access to employment opportunities.

1.17 Within the context of the PPS this will be achieved primarily through development plans which, in their role of facilitating economic development and creating a framework which will allow investment in job creation to take place, will be strongly influenced by New TSN considerations.

2.0 Policy Objectives

2.1 The main objectives of this Statement are:

- to promote sustainable economic development;
- to tackle disadvantage and facilitate job creation in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- to ensure the provision of a generous supply of land suitable for business and industry and a choice and range in terms of quality, size and location;
- to support the re-use of previously developed sites and buildings where they meet the needs of particular economic sectors;
- to improve integration between transport and locations for economic development ;
- to ensure a high standard of quality and design for new development; and
- to ensure that the natural and built heritage is protected.

3.0 The Role of Development Plans

3.1 The overarching strategic framework for the formulation of development plans, as indicated above, is provided by the Regional Development Strategy (RDS). The RDS seeks to:

- promote a balanced spread of economic development opportunities across the Region focused on the Belfast Metropolitan Area, Londonderry, Craigavon and the urban hubs/clusters, as the main centres for employment and services;
- exploit the economic development potential of the key transport corridors;
- promote the regional gateways as economic development opportunities.

3.2 In relation to industrial and business development, and consistent with the provisions of the RDS, development plans will seek to support job creation by identifying and protecting a portfolio of job creation opportunities involving:

- allocating a generous and continuous supply of land with a range of sites offering a choice of size, location and environmental amenity for industrial and/or business use to meet the diverse range of requirements including the expansion and growth of indigenous firms;
- safeguarding identified Strategic Employment Locations;
- indicating the range of acceptable employment uses within particular sites;
- reallocating sites which have proven unsuitable for business and industry;
- promoting the regeneration of previously developed areas and the re-use of reclaimed land and existing buildings;
- promoting mixed-use development associated with economic development and job creation;
- identifying supporting action, for example, on infrastructure provision, environmental improvement or town centre management that can assist the delivery of economic development;
- providing a baseline position for the monitoring and review of the allocation of industrial and business land on a regular basis.

Identification of Land for Industrial, Business and Distribution Development

3.3 Development plans will seek to ensure that there is an ample supply of land available to meet industrial and business needs within the plan area which is suitable for such development and ideally well served by infrastructure. In identifying sites for industrial and business purposes the Department will have regard to:

- the strategic objective of the RDS to focus development within urban areas;
- the potential contribution to regenerating existing urban areas;
- accessibility to the various sections of the community;
- accessibility to the regional transportation network;
- accessibility by a variety of modes of transport;
- any potential environmental impact;
- the availability of adequate infrastructure;
- the opportunity to avail of local resources and labour markets.

3.4 The Department will facilitate through the various stages of the plan formulation process close consultation and discussions with District Councils, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the business community, private sector investors and local enterprise in assessing the amount of land required over the plan period. A variety of sites will normally be identified to provide a wide and flexible range of development opportunities to meet the variety of future needs.

3.5 Within the Department's overall consultation process, it will be important for individual businesses, and their representative bodies, to make known their likely development needs over the plan period and to seek to ensure that the plan will facilitate appropriate provision.

3.6 Development plans, in their role of facilitating and providing for economic development and job creation, will be influenced in this respect by considerations arising from the New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) Initiative. Development plans will seek to facilitate economic development in, or accessible to, the most disadvantaged urban areas to tackle long-term unemployment and issues of employability as part of the New TSN Initiative.

Strategic Employment Locations

3.7 To support the framework contained in the RDS for sustainable regional growth, development plans will, among other things, make provision for a generous and continuous supply of land for employment uses. This will include a limited number of large-scale, strategic locations spread throughout the region, which the RDS has indicated will be identified and safeguarded, to attract inward investment and accommodate indigenous expansion.

3.8 The RDS sets out the criteria which will be taken into account in identifying Strategic Employment Locations (SELs). The Strategy also highlights the need to protect these key locations where loss to other uses would be hard to recover. The scale of SELs envisaged (some up to 40 hectares) is such that master plans and planning agreements are likely to be essential parts of the delivery mechanism.

3.9 The locational and qualitative aspects of major employment sites are becoming increasingly important, not only for specialist single-user developments, but also for campus development, industrial theme parks and business parks. Further study is required on sites of strategic significance in the context of the sustainable development principles set out in the RDS. This study, to be carried out by the Department for Regional Development in conjunction with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Invest Northern Ireland, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Employment and Learning, will include recommendations for a limited number of SELs and sites which are identified will be safeguarded through the development plan process.

Acceptable Uses within Allocated Areas

3.10 The Department recognises that the changing nature of employment requires a more flexible approach to the types of business acceptable in particular locations. This is necessary to assist in supporting job creation and attracting incoming investment. There are a number of high technology, knowledge driven enterprises, and a range of employment creating uses, such as light industry, R&D and some Class 3 high technology office uses which may be acceptable and compatible within an area allocated for industrial and business development. To facilitate such related development and enterprise, the Department will, where appropriate, identify areas for business park development in development plans, where a range of specified business uses will be acceptable, to promote flexibility and choice and help meet the needs of a fast-changing technologically driven market.

3.11 While such flexibility will generally be promoted, development plans may also need to restrict the particular types of industrial or business use permissible within a zoned site, based on local circumstances and environmental factors.

Where appropriate, plans will also provide specifically for the types of industry which, although necessary, may be detrimental to amenity or a potential source of pollution. They will also ensure that development by such industries is separated from land uses which may be sensitive to their effects.

3.12 Development plans will, where appropriate, identify sites or areas where development should incorporate a mixture of uses, including residential, and will identify the suitable uses. The plan may indicate if conditions or planning agreements are likely to be used to secure an appropriate mixture of uses.

Storage and Distribution

3.13 Development plans will not necessarily need to identify a specific supply of land separate to the general industrial and business supply for storage and distribution, as in most cases such usage will be compatible with adjacent industrial or business development.

3.14 There may be a need in development plans, however, to identify and safeguard sites in situations where there is a limited choice of sites available with the required accessibility which are also able to accommodate a high volume of goods vehicles.

3.15 In this context, development plans will take into account the RDS policy guidance that transport dependent industries that focus on the storage, movement and delivery of goods should be located in the transport corridors at well accessed nodes normally on the edges of towns.

Business Clusters

3.16 The RDS seeks to facilitate the clustering of engineering and high technology type businesses, such as those found in ICT and biotechnology, which can contribute to the region's competitiveness by promoting innovation and improved business practices.

3.17 Development plans will, where appropriate, identify locations for such clusters taking into account RDS policy guidance on this matter. Suitable locations identified by the RDS for such business clusters include the centre of corridor towns, at established major business nodes within towns, or in 'industrial office park' developments at the edge of towns, normally as part of mixed-use schemes, with preferred locations at road or road-rail nodes, and transport interchanges.

Office Development

3.18 It is envisaged that most new office development will continue to be concentrated within established town centres, and the RDS in ECON 1.3 seeks

to promote town centres as the major locations and first choice for expanding service employment. Further office development can help reinforce the existing administrative and service functions of many settlements, as well as creating new employment in locations accessible to large sections of the population. Within larger towns, office areas within the town centre may be identified in the relevant development plan.

3.19 Where, however, a business park is identified in the development plan for the area (see 3.10), the plan will identify the criteria under which Class 3 office development will be acceptable in the business park. The plan may, on occasion, identify other areas in settlements where Class 3 or Class 2 office development will be acceptable.

Hazardous Development

3.20 The Planning (Control of Major -Accident Hazards) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 amends the Planning (Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991 to require that in formulating its policies in a development plan, the Department shall have regard to the prevention of major-accident hazards and require that the written statement shall have regard to such matters. In doing so, the Department will take into account the siting of establishments where hazardous substances are used or stored, and the development of land within the vicinity of establishments where hazardous substances are, or may be, present.

Reallocation of Sites

3.21 Industrial and business sites which are poorly located or have inadequate access will be identified during the preparation of development plans and their future use considered.

3.22 Where undeveloped sites or existing industrial estates lack the required environmental quality, design standards or locational advantages expected of modern industrial or business development, the potential for improvement should be considered through the development plan process. Where existing sites or zoned land have remained vacant or undeveloped for a considerable period the Department will ascertain if potential future use for industrial or business purposes is still realistic. If not, they should be de-zoned or reallocated to suitable alternative uses.

Regeneration of Previously Developed Sites

3.23 Previously developed land can contribute to the overall supply of sites for industrial and business development and the RDS in HOU 4.2 recognises that there is a need to protect adequate supplies of such land for purposes such as

employment and services, as well as housing, to help maintain viable local communities.

3.24 The re-use of previously developed sites can also support the New TSN Initiative, economic regeneration and physical renewal – in particular, helping to stimulate enterprise in disadvantaged areas.

3.25 The promotion of mixed-use development to facilitate the start-up and accommodation of small and medium-sized enterprises, as advocated by the RDS in ECON 1.3, can provide a mechanism to bring vacant industrial sites and buildings back into beneficial use.

3.26 Development plans will, where appropriate, identify and safeguard the supply of existing industrial and business land and promote its re-use where economically viable and attractive sites can be provided.

Mixed-Use Development

3.27 The characteristics of much modern industrial and business development is such that it can be carried on in residential areas without causing unacceptable disturbance and adverse impact on residential amenity. Development plans will, where appropriate, identify areas where low-impact industry and business can co-exist with housing, specifying the range of uses appropriate in the area and indicating if conditions or agreements are necessary to safeguard local amenity.

3.28 Major mixed-use sites involving industrial and business development that would attract a significant number of trips should be in locations that are well served by public transport, have adequate infrastructure and are properly integrated, in terms of land use and design, with surrounding areas.

Supporting Action

Design Guidance and Environmental Improvement

3.29 Some existing business and industrial areas present an unattractive appearance discouraging to new enterprises. Where appropriate, development plans will identify areas where the re-use of land and premises and the environmental improvement of existing industrial areas should be a priority, both as a contribution to the regeneration of older industrial areas and as a means of reducing the demand for greenfield sites.

3.30 Development plans may provide guidance through design policies and supplementary guidance such as development briefs for larger sites, on what is expected from developers in terms of design, layout and landscaping. They may also include policies designed to maintain and, where possible, enhance the environmental quality of existing business and industrial areas.

Infrastructure Provision

3.31 Development plans will set out the main infrastructure requirements that developers will be expected to meet for zoned industrial and business sites. These may include access points, servicing arrangements and known physical and infrastructural constraints to be overcome. Infrastructure works may include roads and footways, water, sewerage and land drainage, and other services such as electricity, gas or telecommunications. The specific requirements for each site will depend on local circumstances.

City and Town Centre Improvement

3.32 City and town centres have particular locational advantages which will enable them to accommodate additional employment opportunities, especially for expanding service employment.

3.33 The Department recognises that town centre management and environmental improvement can contribute to the vitality and viability of town centres and make them more attractive locations for further investment in service employment. While many factors affecting the quality of a town centre lie outside the planning system, development plans will identify wherever possible opportunities for regeneration initiatives and environmental improvements which will contribute to the enhancement of the centre's potential for employment growth.

Monitoring and Review

3.34 It is important that the overall quantity of land allocated for industrial and business purposes in a development plan, as well as its location and type, are closely monitored to ensure that there is a continuing stock of suitable land for such uses. Such monitoring will help to identify shortfalls both quantitatively and qualitatively which arise over the plan period, perhaps leading to the need for a formal alteration or replacement of the plan.

3.35 Where in the course of monitoring, land allocated for industrial or business purposes is found to be unsuitable or is not made available, then the Department will consider whether it should be de-zoned or re-allocated to another use as part of any formal alteration or replacement of the plan.

4.0 Planning Policies

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

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

The following policies set out the main planning considerations that the Department will take into account in assessing proposals for industrial, business and distribution development and for proposals affecting such development or land and sites allocated for such uses. The provisions of these policies will prevail unless there are other overriding policy or material considerations which outweigh them and justify a contrary decision.

IBD 1

General Criteria for Industrial, Business and Distribution Development

Planning permission will be granted for an industrial, storage/distribution or business development proposal where it meets all the following criteria:

- (a) it is compatible with the character of the surrounding area;**
- (b) it is compatible with adjacent land uses;**
- (c) it will not damage features of nature conservation interest or man-made heritage;**
- (d) it will not cause or exacerbate flooding;**
- (e) it will not create a noise nuisance;**
- (f) it is capable of dealing satisfactorily with any emission or effluent;**
- (g) the layout and design of all buildings are of high quality;**
- (h) appropriate boundary treatment and means of enclosure are provided;**
- (i) any areas of outside storage proposed will be adequately screened from public view;**
- (j) satisfactory landscaping arrangements will be provided;**
- (k) it will not result in a significant increase in traffic congestion or be a hazard to road safety;**
- (l) adequate access, parking and manoeuvring areas will be provided; and**
- (m) a movement pattern is provided that supports walking and cycling, meets the needs of people whose mobility is impaired, respects existing public rights of way and provides adequate and convenient access to public transport.**

Justification and Amplification

4.1 The characteristics of industry and business uses are continuously changing. Some industrial and business uses can be carried on in proximity to residential or other sensitive uses without detriment to amenity by reason of noise, vibration or noxious emissions. It is not always appropriate to separate industry and business, especially small-scale developments, from residential areas for which they provide employment and services. The Department will not restrict an industrial or business use solely because it differs from the predominant land use in the locality. Rather, uses of land will be regarded as incompatible with each other if their juxtaposition would cause serious problems for the occupiers of either.

4.2 Where industrial or business development is permitted in residential areas, however, the Department will, where necessary, control subsequent intensification by conditions or planning agreements where such intensification would lead to foreseeable harm to local amenity.

4.3 In making provision for industrial and business development, and in considering proposals, the Department will seek to minimise adverse effects on natural and built heritage resources. Particular care will be taken to safeguard local, national and international natural heritage designations. The Department will expect development proposals affecting features and areas of the historic environment, such as archaeological sites, listed buildings and conservation areas, to protect and, where possible, enhance their character. The Department's policies for nature conservation and the built heritage are set out in Planning Policy Statement 2 'Planning and Nature Conservation' and Planning Policy Statement 6 'Planning, Archaeology and the Built Environment' respectively.

4.4 Concern for environmental issues in general in relation to industrial and business development is not only important in itself but it can make sound economic sense. Good design, for instance, is as important for industrial and business development as for other forms of development. It is not just about appearance and how a development relates to adjoining buildings and spaces. It also encompasses a commitment to energy conservation and waste management, and careful attention to the quality of the surrounding landscaping. Well-designed buildings and sites are not only better for the wider environment but can make economic sense by increasing job satisfaction and minimising running costs.

4.5 Access to a proposed site, parking and servicing arrangements and the overall impact of an industrial or business development on the local road network will all be carefully considered by the Department in assessing development proposals. For major developments a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan may be required. The Department will seek to ensure that the development proposed will not lead to increased congestion on the public road network and that the location chosen is also accessible to walking, cycling and public transport networks.

Environmental Impact Assessment

4.6 Environmental assessment is the process by which information about the likely environmental effects of certain major projects is collected, assessed and taken into account by the Department in deciding whether planning permission should be granted. Major industrial and business development proposals are among those most likely to be affected by the requirement to undertake environmental assessment. The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 set out the types of project where an Environmental Statement will be required to assess the likely environmental effects of the proposal and properly consider any mitigating factors.

Hazardous Substances

4.7 In addition to planning permission some industrial developments may also require consent under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993, as amended by The Planning (Control of Major-Accident Hazards) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000. This legislation allows the Department to consider whether the proposed storage or use of a significant quantity of a hazardous substance is appropriate in a particular location, having regard to the risks arising to persons in the surrounding area and the wider implications for the community. Consent is also required where a hazardous substance is introduced onto a site, or used differently within it, without there being any associated development requiring planning permission. Detailed guidance on these matters is currently contained in Development Control Advice Note 12 – Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances, published by the Department in May 2000.

Policy IBD 2

Industrial, Business and Distribution Development in Settlements

Proposals for industrial or storage/distribution development in settlements will be permitted in areas allocated for such purposes in development plans where they are of a scale and form appropriate to the location. Elsewhere in settlements such proposals will be determined on their merits.

Proposals for business development will be permitted in town centres, business parks or other urban locations identified in a development plan. Elsewhere in settlements such proposals will only be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) there is no feasible site within the town centre, business park or other location specified in a development plan;**
- (b) the proposal is for a definite rather than a speculative business development; and**
- (c) the proposal would make a substantial contribution to the economy of the urban area.**

Where a business development proposal satisfies the above criteria, the Department will favour an edge-of town centre location over a location elsewhere.

Justification and Amplification

4.8 The RDS indicates that the urban hubs/clusters of the region will be the main focus for employment and services. The objective is to capitalise on development opportunities provided by the concentration of people and goods combined with available infrastructure and the clustering of a range of business services, including the professional, technical and financial services essential to economic development.

4.9 The Department will ensure through development plans that a range of suitable sites are allocated and safeguarded within settlements to meet the future demands of industrial and business enterprises. It is in the interests of the regional economy as a whole that such allocations are retained to provide adequate land for the future industrial and business development of the region. The need to retain such allocated land will, therefore, be an overriding consideration in dealing with development proposals. Even where land has been zoned but undeveloped for a considerable period it may not be appropriate to permit development for other uses.

4.10 Decisions on the reallocation of land zoned but undeveloped for industrial and business purposes, when necessary, will normally be made through the development plan process.

4.11 Town centres will continue to be the primary focus for expanding service employment, as advocated by the RDS. The Department, however, also recognises that some Class 3 office development centred on activities such as communications and computer software design are clearly closely related to high technology knowledge-driven light industrial uses and R&D, and that there are economic and other benefits in grouping such uses in business parks.

4.12 Where an area for a business park is identified in a development plan, the plan will specify the criteria under which Class 3 office development will be acceptable in the area. The development plan may also, on occasion, specify areas in larger settlements outside town centres or business parks where Class 3 uses will be acceptable.

4.13 Exceptionally where there is a definite rather than a speculative proposal for a new Class 3 office development which would make a substantial contribution to the economy of a particular town and no feasible site exists within the existing town centre, a business park or other area identified in a development plan as suitable for such development, consideration may be given to an alternative site within the urban area. A location on the periphery of the existing central area must be considered first. Any site to be acceptable will need to be compatible with existing land uses in the immediate area and meet normal planning and environmental standards.

Policy IBD 3

Retention of Industrial, Business and Distribution Uses within Settlements

Proposals which would result in the loss of an existing industrial or storage/distribution use or land allocated in settlements for such purposes in development plans will only be permitted where:

- (a) the proposal is a specific regeneration initiative to meet the needs of a particular locality and includes employment uses of an appropriate type and scale as part of a mixed-use development; or**
- (b) the present use harms the character or amenities of the adjacent area and overriding local benefits would come from the redevelopment; or**
- (c) the site and buildings are unsuitable for modern industrial or distribution purposes.**

Proposals which would result in the loss of land allocated in settlements for a business park in a development plan will not be permitted.

Justification and Amplification

4.14 It is important that industrial and business land and buildings which are well-located and suited to such purposes are retained and only exceptionally will the Department consider the loss of such land and buildings to other uses. The Department is keen to support the diversity of the local economy and the retention of existing sites for industry and business is often necessary to achieve this aim.

4.15 The retention of business and industrial land in urban locations can not only make a substantial contribution to the renewal and revitalisation of towns but can also provide employment opportunities accessible to large sections of the urban population and the rural hinterland. The existence of redundant business premises and derelict industrial land can be an important resource for the creation of new job opportunities in areas of high unemployment, particularly small businesses, and can help reduce the demand for greenfield sites.

4.16 Planning permission will not normally be granted for the change of use, or the redevelopment for other uses, of sites or premises last used for industrial or business purposes. Redevelopment of existing industrial and business sites might include other uses, as a specific regeneration initiative to meet the needs of a particular locality.

4.17 The reallocation of existing industrial and business sites to other uses where necessary should normally be carried out as part of the development plan process.

**Policy IBD 4
Development Incompatible with Industrial, Business or Distribution
Development**

Proposals for development in the vicinity of existing industrial, business or storage/distribution premises which would be incompatible with the existing or approved use or would prejudice its future operation will be refused.

Justification and Amplification

4.18 Some proposed developments may be incompatible with industrial and business enterprises already operating in the vicinity. For example, certain types of industrial use would be incompatible with existing industrial undertakings requiring a particularly contaminant free environment. In other cases, new development could prejudice the continued existence of a particular business use. Such cases can arise where the particular processes being carried out have a tendency to cause adverse effects of some kind on adjacent land, even when all reasonable remedial measures have been taken by the operator.

4.19 The requirements of non-planning legislation, for example those relating to public health and environmental pollution, may result in costly new requirements and restrictions being imposed on such businesses as a consequence of new neighbouring development. In such circumstances, the Department may refuse planning permission for new development in order to avoid jeopardising employment in the existing enterprise.

Policy IBD 5 Financial, Professional and Other Services

Proposals for the development of financial, professional and other services which fall within Class 2 of the Use Classes Order will be permitted in town centres. Elsewhere in settlements such proposals will only be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) the proposal is located in or adjacent to a District or Local Centre and does not detract from its vitality and viability, or in another appropriate area identified in a development plan;**
- (b) the use is clearly designed to serve a local need;**
- (c) the floorspace is limited to a maximum of 200 sq. metres;**
- (d) the proposal is not located in a primarily residential area; and**
- (e) the development provides appropriate parking and is satisfactory in terms of environmental considerations.**

Justification and Amplification

4.20 Class 2 Office development, that is, financial, professional and other services appropriate to provide in a shopping area where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public, should primarily be located in city and town centres. This can help reinforce the existing service function of these centres, create new employment in highly accessible locations and help maintain the vitality and viability of town centres.

4.21 It is, however, recognised that there is often a need for small-scale Class 2 office development within urban areas outside town centres. Examples include estate agents, building societies and banks. These offices which provide essential local services will normally only be permitted in or adjacent to existing or proposed district or local centres or other neighbourhood centres identified in development plans. Office development will only be permitted in local shopping centres where the scale does not detract from the retailing function of the centre. An appropriate level of office development which provides local services may be permitted in villages and other smaller rural settlements.

Policy IBD 6

Industrial, Business and Distribution Development in the Countryside

Proposals for industrial, business and storage/distribution development in the countryside will be permitted in accordance with the provisions of the following policies:

- **Farm diversification – Policy IBD 7**
- **The re-use and adaptation of redundant rural buildings for industrial or business use – Policies IBD 8 and IBD 9**
- **The expansion of an established industrial, business or distribution use – Policy IBD 10**
- **The redevelopment of an established industrial, business or distribution use – Policy IBD 11**
- **Major industrial development – Policy IBD 12**
- **Small industrial or business development associated with a village or other rural settlement – Policy IBD 13**

Justification and Amplification

4.22 The Department is committed to facilitating the opportunities for economic development and diversification in the countryside while maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the quality of the rural environment for local people and visitors. A pleasant and attractive countryside is central to its economic prosperity and healthy economic activity in rural areas facilitates investment to sustain and enhance the countryside's appeal.

4.23 The Department's general approach is that development in the countryside should benefit economic activity while protecting or enhancing the environment. The Department will permit appropriate opportunities for farm diversification, the re-use of redundant rural buildings and appropriate redevelopment and expansion proposals for industrial and business purposes. However, there is also a need to restrict development in the interests of rural amenity and, in general, new buildings for such uses in the open countryside outside settlements will be strictly controlled. An exception will, however, operate for major industrial proposals in certain restricted circumstances.

4.24 Within small rural settlements, the Department will not normally zone land for industrial or business development in the interests of flexibility. Favourable consideration will be given to applications for small-scale industrial and business

uses on unzoned land included within the settlement limit, provided the proposal is of a scale, nature and design appropriate to the character of the settlement involved and it meets the normal planning criteria for this type of development. Exceptionally, where no feasible sites exist within the limits, a small-scale proposal may be permitted on the edge of a rural settlement.

4.25 Development proposals relating to storage and distribution use will, in general, be more tightly controlled in the countryside under the above range of policies than proposals for industrial or other business use. It is considered that such proposals are usually more difficult to absorb into the countryside without detrimental impact on rural amenity and their capacity for generating employment is generally less than these other uses.

4.26 All proposals for such development in rural areas will need to meet the general criteria for industrial, distribution and business development contained in Policy IBD 1.

Policy IBD 7 Farm Diversification

Proposals to diversify the range of activities on a farm holding to include small-scale industrial or business development will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) the proposal is complementary to the agricultural operations on the farm and is operated as part of the farm holding;**
- (b) the character, scale and location of the proposal is compatible with its landscape setting;**
- (c) the proposal involves the re-use or adaptation of a farm building; or**
- (d) if a new building is justified outside a Green Belt or Countryside Policy Area, it is sited in or adjacent to an existing group of buildings, is of compatible design and would blend satisfactorily into the landscape.**

In Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas, no new buildings will be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances

Justification and Amplification

4.27 The agricultural industry continues to undergo substantial changes. Changes in farm income levels and price support, as well as the development of new techniques and continued rationalisation, have led many farmers to look for alternative sources of income to supplement that derived from farming. Some farmers have responded by diversification into non-agricultural activities located on the farm holding. The Executive is committed to supporting this process of diversification where it is compatible with other objectives for the countryside.

4.28 In encouraging economic diversity and agricultural diversification, it is important that the countryside of Northern Ireland is not spoilt by the unfettered development of urban uses. Diversification proposals, therefore, should be of a scale and nature appropriate for the location and be capable of satisfactory integration into the rural landscape.

4.29 Planning permission will be granted for appropriate farm diversification enterprises in situations where the project is clearly tied to an existing farm holding or occupant. A new enterprise will need to be modest in scale and have no significant adverse impact on the locality. A new building will not be permitted in Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas and elsewhere only where existing farm buildings are not available to accommodate the proposed use, either because they are essential for the maintenance of the existing farm enterprise or are clearly unsuitable for adaptation and re-use. In such situations the new building must be located in or adjacent to an existing group of buildings, be of compatible scale and design and blend satisfactorily into the landscape.

Policy IBD 8

Re-use and Adaptation of a Redundant Non-Agricultural Rural Building for Industrial or Business Use

Planning permission will be granted for the re-use and adaptation of a redundant non-agricultural rural building for industrial or business use where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) the building is genuinely redundant and its re-use would not result in the need for a new building as a replacement;**
- (b) the building is of sound and permanent construction and is proposed for re-use and adaptation without complete or major reconstruction;**
- (c) the form, bulk and general design of the building are in keeping with its surroundings and any conversion work respects local building styles and materials**
- (d) there is sufficient room in the curtilage of the building to park the vehicles of those who will work or visit there and also to service its use, all without detriment to the visual amenity of the countryside;**
- (e) no business or industrial activity or storage of raw materials or finished goods is to take place outside the building; and**
- (f) no new fences, walls or other structures associated with the use of the building or the definition of its curtilage or any sub-division of it will be erected if they would damage the visual amenity of the countryside.**

Justification and Amplification

4.30 The Department recognises the importance of enterprises emanating from the local community in the regeneration of rural areas. Where possible such enterprises should be contained within existing buildings. The countryside contains many non-agricultural buildings which have outlived their original purposes. Examples include old mills, rural schools, churches and other community buildings. Unless alternative uses can be found, they may suffer decay and dereliction leading to the despoliation of the rural landscape.

4.31 With little external alteration, some of these buildings may be suitable for re-use for business or industrial purposes. The re-use of such properties can help stimulate new enterprises and provide much needed and acceptable accommodation for small-scale business and industry. Favourable consideration will be given to proposals for the adaptation and re-use of existing rural buildings, where the proposal meets the normal planning criteria and is of a scale and type which can be absorbed into the rural environment without leading to a significant loss of amenity.

Policy IBD 9

Re-use and Adaptation of a Redundant Agricultural Building for Industrial, or Business Use outside a Farm Diversification Scheme

Planning permission will be granted for the re-use and adaptation of a redundant agricultural building for industrial or business use where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) the building is genuinely redundant and its re-use would not result in the need for a new building as a replacement;**
- (b) there will be no adverse effect on the viability of a farming unit, or conflict with the operating of a working farm;**
- (c) the building is of sound and permanent construction and is proposed for re-use and adaptation without complete or major reconstruction;**
- (d) the form, bulk and general design of the building are in keeping with its surroundings and any conversion work respects local building styles and materials;**
- (e) there is sufficient room in the curtilage of the building to park the vehicles of those who will work or visit there and also to service its use, all without detriment to the visual amenity of the countryside;**
- (f) no business or industrial activity or storage of raw materials or finished goods is to take place outside the building; and**
- (g) no new fences, walls or other structures associated with the use of the building or the definition of its curtilage or any sub-division of it will be erected if they would damage the visual amenity of the countryside.**

Justification and Amplification

4.32 Favourable consideration may be given to the re-use of redundant farm buildings for appropriate small-scale business or industrial use outside of farm diversification schemes. However to prevent potential abuse of this policy, the Department will need to be satisfied that:

- where the building is part of an agricultural holding, there is clear evidence that the building is no longer required for agricultural purposes. In such circumstances, permitted development rights for new farm buildings in respect of that agricultural holding or unit may be withdrawn.
- the building has had an existing genuine agricultural use for a considerable length of time.

4.33 The Department will examine carefully applications for re-use of buildings erected under agricultural permitted development rights to ensure there was no breach of planning control when it was substantially completed, because there was no genuine agricultural justification for its construction.

Policy IBD 10

Expansion of an Established Industrial, Business or Distribution Use in the Countryside

A proposal for the expansion of an established industrial, business or storage/distribution use in the countryside will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) it will not harm the character or appearance of the countryside;**
- (b) it respects the scale, design and materials of the original building(s) on the site and any historic or architectural interest the original property may have;**
- (c) it will not harm the amenities of nearby residents;**
- (d) it will not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate to rural roads or require improvements which would harm the character of rural roads in the area;**
- (e) there is no significant increase in the site area of the enterprise; and**
- (f) in Green Belts And Countryside Policy Areas, no new buildings other than minor extensions to existing buildings are proposed;**
- (g) outside Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas, new buildings may be approved providing they are small in scale and clearly subsidiary to the existing building development.**

Justification and Amplification

4.34 There are already many industrial and business enterprises located in rural areas. Some are long established, others normally small-scale, have been granted planning permission to operate in disused rural buildings. Many of these enterprises will over time need to expand and/or diversify. While such expansion is desirable for job creation, it can radically change the nature of the enterprise and its impact on the local environment. It is therefore important to weigh carefully the advantages to the rural economy of job creation or an improved industrial/business facility against the potential for an adverse impact on the rural environment.

4.35 Where proposals for expansion of an industrial or business enterprise in the countryside are considered inappropriate, the Department may recommend relocation of the enterprise to a suitable site in a nearby settlement. Exceptionally, where it is accepted that relocation is not possible for particular operational or employment reasons, such expansion may be permitted.

4.36 In all cases where permission for expansion is granted, the Department will require reasonable measures to be taken to ameliorate the impact, not only of the extension but also of the existing enterprise, on the local environment. Such measures, where required, will normally be considered essential to the grant of

planning permission. Where necessary, planning agreements may be used to secure environmental improvements. Conditions will also be imposed to ensure there is adequate landscaping, parking and servicing provision.

Policy IBD 11

Redevelopment of an Established Industrial, Business or Distribution Use in the Countryside for Industrial or Business Purposes

Proposals for the redevelopment of an established industrial, business or storage/distribution use in the countryside for industrial or business purposes will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) there would be environmental benefits as a result of the development;**
- (b) the redevelopment scheme deals comprehensively with the full extent of the existing site;**
- (c) the amenities of nearby residents is not harmed;**
- (d) traffic of a type or amount inappropriate to rural roads or which requires improvements which would harm the character of rural roads in the area will not be generated;**
- (e) the floorspace of replacement buildings is not materially larger than those to be replaced; and**
- (f) the extent of the site is not increased.**

The redevelopment of an established storage/distribution site for continuing storage/distribution use will also be permitted subject to the above criteria. However, the redevelopment of established industrial or business sites for storage/distribution will not be permitted.

Justification and Amplification

4.37 The Northern Ireland countryside contains some major developed sites presently or formerly in industrial or business use. Whether they are redundant or in continuing use, the complete or partial redevelopment of these sites may offer the opportunity for environmental improvement and the promotion of job creation without adding to their impact on the amenity of the countryside.

4.38 The character and dispersal of new development will need to be considered as well as its footprint. The location of the new buildings should be decided having regard to the character of the area, the main features of the landscape and the need to integrate the new development with its surroundings.

4.39 The site should be considered as a whole, whether or not all the buildings are to be redeveloped. Any proposals for partial redevelopment should be put forward in the context of a comprehensive plan for the future overall development of the site.

4.40 The Department will not favour the redevelopment of existing industrial or business uses in the countryside for storage/distribution use, partly because of the generally greater impact on rural amenity which would result and partly

because the employment normally generated by storage/distribution use of a site is relatively less significant than its use for industrial or business purposes.

Policy IBD 12

Major Industrial Development in the Countryside

A major industrial proposal will only be permitted in the countryside where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) it is a firm proposal of overriding importance that will make a significant contribution to the regional economy;**
- (b) the long-term economic benefits can be clearly articulated;**
- (c) alternative sites are not available;**
- (d) the development can be successfully integrated into the landscape;**
- (e) the buildings and associated development infrastructure are of a very high standard; and**
- (f) it would not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for the character of access roads or would require improvements which would damage the character of these roads.**

Justification and Amplification

4.41 The Department will not normally grant permission for existing urban-based enterprises seeking relocation in the countryside. However, some new major industrial projects may require sites outside settlements because of their size or specific site requirements.

4.42 Developers will need to demonstrate that there is an overriding reason for the development in the interest of the region as a whole, that a thorough exploration of alternatives has been made and that the alternatives are unsuitable. It will be the responsibility of the developer to explore all environmental impacts, both local and of wider consequence. The Department will consider not only the immediate needs and benefits but also the wider long-term environmental effects of the proposal.

4.43 Where such a proposal is justified, the design of the buildings and associated development infrastructure will need to be of the highest standard and the development must be well integrated into the landscape to minimise its environmental impact.

Policy IBD 13

Small Industrial and Business Development associated with a Village or Other Rural Settlement.

A genuine proposal to develop a small enterprise park/centre or a small rural enterprise associated with a village or other rural settlement will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) there is no suitable site within the settlement;**
- (b) the proposal would make a significant contribution to the local economy;**
- (c) the site is clearly associated with the settlement;**
- (d) the site is not in a Green Belt or Countryside Policy Area;**
- (e) the site is not on a Protected Route;**
- (f) the proposal does not adversely affect the setting of the settlement;**
- (g) the proposal does not contribute to unacceptable urban sprawl or ribbon development; and**
- (h) the scale of the proposal is in keeping with the size of the settlement.**

Where the above criteria can be met the Department will apply the following sequential test in terms of location:

- (i) a minor extension to the existing development limit, subject to amenity and environmental considerations;**
- (ii) any site close to the development limits which currently contains buildings or where the site is already in a degraded or derelict state and there is an opportunity to improve the environment;**
- (iii) an undeveloped site in close proximity to the settlement and clearly associated with it.**

Justification and Amplification

4.44 While it is the Department's policy to facilitate the development of new industrial and business enterprises in appropriate locations to diversify the rural economy, generally such development should be located in defined rural settlements or in disused rural buildings, or approved as part of a farm diversification scheme. It is important, however, that firm proposals for such enterprises are not blocked due to a lack of suitable land within existing settlements. The nature of a small business may be such as to require some physical separation from the built up area because of potential nuisance, for instance noise or smell. The Department will therefore adopt a flexible approach to ensure adequate provision is made for small rural enterprises.

4.45 Planning permission may be granted for a site outside the limits of development for a settlement, provided it is clearly closely associated with the settlement. Sites remote from any settlement will not be approved.

4.46 The policy will only be applied in exceptional circumstances where there is a definite proposal for industrial or business development which would make a significant contribution to the local economy. Proposals of a speculative nature will not be permitted. Permission will only be granted where the proposal is of a scale appropriate to the settlement involved.

4.47 In addition, the policy will only be applicable in those circumstances where there is no reasonable prospect of securing a suitable site within the limits of development for the particular settlement. An exhaustive search of all land within the development limits will be a necessity. In some situations land may be available but constraints to development render it inappropriate to the proposed development.

Annex 1: Homeworking

Many small businesses are started by people working in their own homes, and technological innovations are likely to increase the incidence of homeworking. This will be particularly important in rural areas where modern communications permit businesses to be located without any major disadvantage.

Homeworking does not necessarily require planning permission. Permission is not normally required where the use of part of a dwellinghouse for business purposes does not change the overall character of the property's use as a single dwelling, for example, the use by a householder of a room as an office. Those considering working from home are advised to seek the advice of the Department at an early stage. Homeworking is likely to be ancillary to the residential use if:

- work is carried out primarily by persons living in the residential unit;
- the business use is clearly secondary to the main use of the property as a dwelling house;
- the use is carried out totally within the building;
- there will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring residents, for example, from noise, advertising, impact on visual amenity or traffic generation; and
- the use is not one which by its nature would attract more than occasional visitors.

Where the business activity increases and the non-residential use of the property ceases to be ancillary to its use as a single dwelling, a material change of use for which planning permission is required is likely to have taken place. The likelihood of there having been such a material change of use may be indicated where the following have occurred:

- a significant alteration to the appearance of the dwelling;
 - a significant increase in the volume of visitors or traffic;
 - a significant increase in noise, fumes or smell;
 - the installation of special machinery or equipment not normally found in a dwelling; and
- the laying out of rooms in such a way that they could not easily revert to residential use at the end of the working day.

Annex 2: Screening for Equality Impact Assessment

Consultation Draft PPS 4 (Revised) - Industry, Business and Distribution Screening for Equality impact Assessment

Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Section 75) - Statutory Equality Obligations

1.0 General Details

1.1 Title of policy / policy document and date to be introduced:

Consultation Draft Planning Policy Statement 4 (Revised) Industry, Business and Distribution. Intended for publication December 2002.

1.2 Brief summary of the policy / policy document:

This Consultation Draft Planning Policy Statement, PPS 4 (Revised) 'Industry, Business and Distribution' sets out the Department's planning policies for industrial development and other defined business uses and indicates how economic and employment growth associated with such uses can be accommodated and promoted in development plans. It seeks to facilitate and accommodate economic growth in ways compatible with stated social and environmental objectives and sustainable development.

1.3 Aims of the policy / policy document:

The key aims of the PPS are to:

- to promote sustainable economic development;
- to tackle disadvantage and facilitate job creation in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- to ensure the provision of a generous supply of land suitable for business and industry and a choice and range in terms of quality, size and location;
- to support the re-use of previously developed sites and buildings where they meet the needs of particular economic sectors;
- to improve integration between transport and locations for economic development ;
- to ensure a high standard of quality and design for new development; and
- to ensure that the natural and built heritage is protected.

2.0 Screening Analysis

Screening aims to identify those policies which are likely to have the greatest impact on equality of opportunity and community relations. This is assessed against the nine categories listed below:

- (1) Persons of different religious beliefs
- (2) Persons of different political opinions
- (3) Persons of different racial groups
- (4) Persons of different ages
- (5) Persons of different marital status
- (6) Persons of different sexual orientation
- (7) Men and women generally
- (8) Persons with a disability and persons without
- (9) Persons with dependants and persons without

2.1 Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups within any of the nine categories?

YES		NO	✓
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 (please tick)

2.2 Is there any evidence that particular groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular main policy area?

YES		NO	✓
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 (please tick)

In terms of the nine Section 75 groups, there is no evidence to suggest that any of the groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policies and guidance contained in Draft PPS4.

2.3 Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations by altering policy or working with others in Government or the community at large?

YES		NO	✓
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 (please tick)

The planning policies contained in Section 4 of Draft PPS4 are concerned with development control issues and are largely reactive in nature, to specific proposals for economic development as they arise through planning applications. Section 3 of the document deals with the role of development plans in supporting job creation by identifying and protecting a portfolio of job creation opportunities. It will be a primary function of development plans to promote and provide for a range of economic development opportunities in their areas and they will themselves be required to meet the statutory equality obligations of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

It should be noted that the formulation of the policies in this Draft PPS involved discussions with two other government bodies concerned with economic development in the Region, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Department for Regional Development.

2.4 Have consultations in the past with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies create problems which are specific to them?

YES		NO	✓
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(please tick)

3.0 Impact Assessment Decision

3.1 Full impact assessment procedure is confined to those policies considered likely to have significant implications for equality of opportunity and community relations.

Do you consider, taking account of the Screening Analysis in Section 2.0, that this policy / policy document needs to be submitted to a full equality impact assessment?

YES		NO	✓
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(please tick)

Reason for Decision

As a result of the screening analysis in Section 2.0 it is considered that there will be no significant implications for equality of opportunity or community relations as a result of the policies contained in Draft Planning Policy Statement 4 either directly as regards developers or indirectly for the public at large. The thrust of the Policy Statement is to facilitate sustainable economic development throughout the Region for the benefit of all.

Public Consultation Draft
Planning Policy Statement 4 – Industry, Business and Distribution

The Department of the Environment has a statutory duty, laid down in Article 3 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 to formulate and co-ordinate policy for securing the orderly and consistent development of land and the planning of that development. The Department's planning policies are normally issued through Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), which set out policies on particular aspects of land use planning and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents will be taken into account in the preparation of Development Plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

The Department has now issued for public consultation a draft Planning Policy Statement, PPS4, entitled 'Industry, Business and Distribution'.

The draft PPS sets out the Department's planning policies for industrial development and other defined business uses and indicates how economic and employment growth associated with such uses can be accommodated and promoted in development plans. It seeks to facilitate and accommodate economic growth in ways compatible with social and environmental objectives and sustainable development.

The attached paper invites comments on the draft PPS. These should reflect the structure of the document as far as possible with references to paragraph numbers or policies where relevant. Responses should be sent to:

John Linden,
Principal Planning Officer,
Planning Service Headquarters,
Clarence Court,
10-18 Adelaide Street,
BELFAST, BT2 8GB

or by e-mail to: planning.service.hq@nics.gov.uk

Responses should be submitted no later than 23rd May 2003.

Further copies of this document may be obtained by telephoning (028) 9054 0109 and by textphone at (028) 9054 0642. The draft PPS will be made available on request in large text print, Braille or audio cassette. The consultation draft is also available on the DOE Website: www.doeni.gov.uk/planning/

In keeping with our policy on openness, the Department may wish to make responses to this consultation document publicly available upon request. At the end of the consultation period the Department will carefully consider all comments received, following which the draft statement will be amended if necessary and, subject to Ministerial approval, published in final form.

John Cleland
Director of Professional Services
24th January 2003