



Planning Policy
Statement 3
(PPS 3)

Access, Movement and Parking

**Clarification of Policy AMP 3:
Access to Protected Routes**



An Agency within the Department of the

Environment

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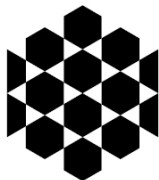
Clarification of Policy AMP 3: Access to Protected Routes

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

This document provides clarification to Policy AMP 3: Access to Protected Routes of PPS 3 'Access, Movement and Parking', published in February 2005, and must be read in conjunction with the policies contained within this PPS.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 The Department has a statutory duty, laid down in Article 3 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, to formulate and co-ordinate policy for securing the orderly and consistent development of land and the planning of that development. The Department is required to ensure that such policy is in general conformity with the Regional Development Strategy.
- 1.3 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."
- 1.4 This document provides clarification to Policy AMP 3: Access to Protected Routes of PPS 3 'Access, Movement and Parking', published in February 2005, and must be read in conjunction with the policies contained within this PPS.
- 1.5 The need for clarification on this matter has arisen for the following reasons:
 - To address an ambiguity in the policy as to whether or not particular roads are designed to an appropriate standard as Dual Carriageways, Ring Roads, Through-Passes and By-Passes; and
 - To address in policy terms access onto High Standard Dual Carriageways, a new standard of Dual Carriageway that is similar in design terms to a Motorway.
- 1.6 The Clarification has been prepared in consultation with the Department for Regional Development (DRD) Roads Service who have provided an updated Protected Routes map for Northern Ireland and associated online schedule to accompany this document.
- 1.7 **With the Clarification to Policy AMP 3 in this document, the corresponding policy contained within PPS 3, published in February 2005, is superseded.**
- 1.8 The Department has issued the document in final form without prior consultation as it relates solely to one policy within PPS 3 and in view of the minor nature of the matters involved.

- 1.9 PPS 3 'Access, Movement and Parking' was subject to an equality impact screening exercise which concluded that it was unlikely to have any significant adverse implications for equality of opportunity or community relations. Notwithstanding this, the Department decided to subject this clarification to a separate equality screening exercise the outcome of which has indicated that it is also unlikely to have any significant adverse implications for equality of opportunity or community relations.
- 1.10 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.

2.0 Clarification of Policy AMP 3

Policy AMP 3 Access to Protected Routes

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

Motorways and High Standard Dual Carriageways – All locations

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

Other Dual Carriageways, Ring Roads, Through-Passes and By-Passes – All locations

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

Other Protected Routes – Outside Settlement Limits

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

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

Other Protected Routes – Within Settlement Limits

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

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

The distinction between the various categories of Protected Routes is illustrated on the Protected Routes map.

Justification and Amplification

- 2.1 The Department has a long established policy of restricting access onto the main roads that facilitate the efficient movement of traffic over long distances in Northern Ireland. These roads contribute significantly to economic prosperity by providing efficient links between all the main towns, airports and seaports, and with the Republic of Ireland.
- 2.2 The roads onto which this policy of access control is exercised are known as 'Protected Routes' and comprise:
 - primary routes;
 - routes between the principal town in each District and/or cross border;
 - routes to ports and airports; and
 - selected routes with high traffic flows.

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

- 2.3 DRD Roads Service has prepared an up to date map (see Annex A) identifying the existing roads throughout Northern Ireland established as Protected Routes. This now indicates the distinction between the various categories of Protected Routes and should be read together with the online schedule (which can be found at www.roadsni.gov.uk). As new roads continue to be constructed DRD will update this schedule and the Protected Routes map as necessary.

- 2.4 The Protected Routes network has progressively been improved over the years, including the building of motorways, ring roads, through-passes, by-passes and dual carriageways. Such improvements to the strategic road network in Northern Ireland will continue in the future as part of Roads Service's ongoing programme of investment. This will include the provision of High Standard Dual Carriageways¹, a new standard of dual carriageway, similar in design terms to a motorway. It is important that a new access or intensified use of an existing access onto a Protected Route does not compromise their function of facilitating the free and safe movement of traffic or does not significantly add to congestion. Additionally on stretches of Protected Routes designed specifically to facilitate the efficient and safe movement of traffic, it is essential that access which would compromise road safety or prejudice their design standards, is severely restricted.
- 2.5 In all cases, where access to a Protected Route is acceptable in principle it will also be required to be safe in accordance with Policy AMP 2.

¹ A High Standard Dual Carriageway is a dual carriageway with all junctions either 'Grade Separated' or 'at-grade left-turn only'. There are no cross-overs on the central median.

