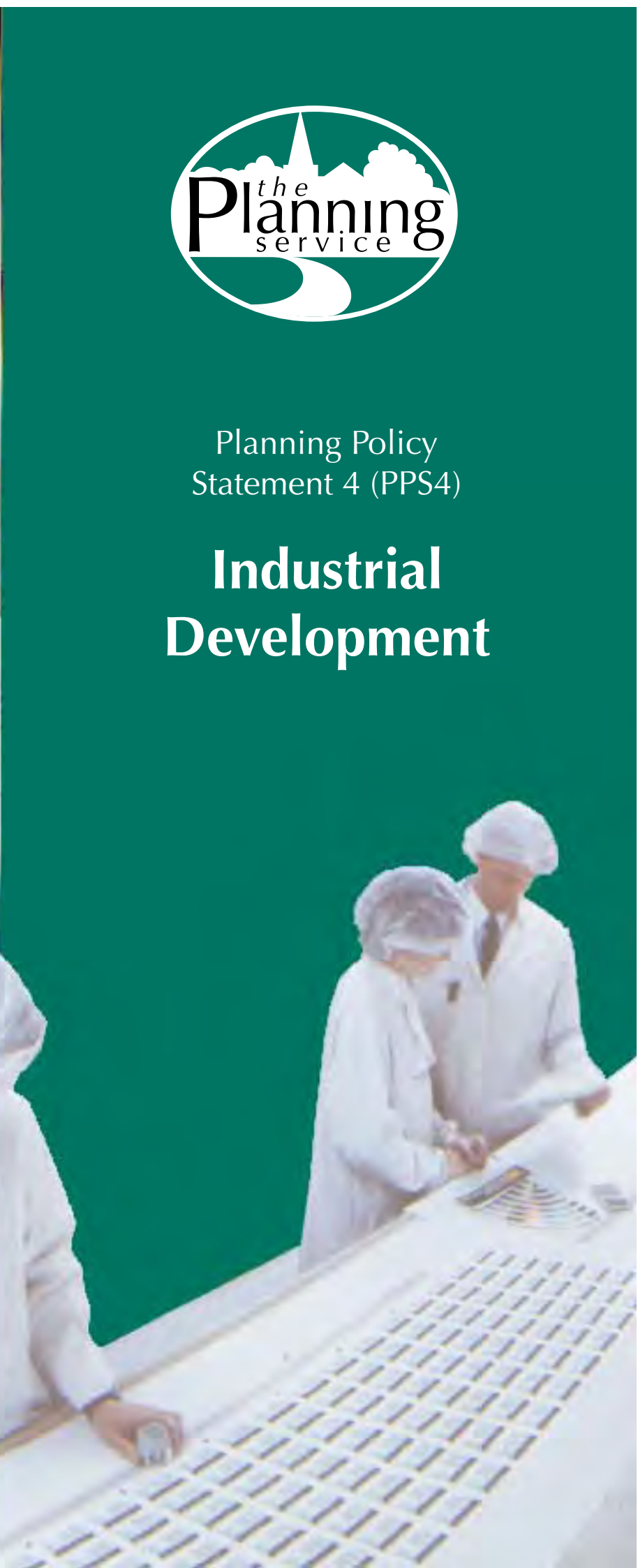




Planning Policy
Statement 4 (PPS4)

Industrial Development



An Agency within the
Department of the Environment
for Northern Ireland

CONTENTS

	Paragraph
CONTEXT	1
Scope	3
Importance of Industrial Development	5
Sustainable Development	7
Transport Considerations	9
Targeting Social Need	10
DEVELOPMENT PLANS	11
Requirements of Industry	15
Zoning of Land	17
Large Single User Sites	23
Monitoring and Review of Industrial Land Provision	24
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	25
Homeworking and other Ancillary Industrial Uses	26
General Criteria for Assessing Industrial Development Proposals	28
Developments Incompatible with Existing Industry	31
Industries of an Offensive or Hazardous Nature	32
Environmental Assessment	33
Control of Hazardous Substances	34
Retention of Industrial Land and Buildings	35
Non Industrial Uses on Zoned Industrial Land	36
Enterprises on Farm Holdings	38
Small Off Farm Rural Enterprises	42
Rural Business Use Class	46
Major Industrial Projects in the Countryside	47
Expansion of Rural Enterprises	48
Unauthorised Development	49

CONTEXT

1 The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland is the unitary planning authority for Northern Ireland and is responsible for regulating development and land use in the interests of the community. The Planning Service, an Agency within the Department, administers its planning functions.

2 Planning Policy Statements set out the policies of the Department on aspects of land-use planning. These statements provide a context for the preparation of development plans and are also material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. The Department has prepared this Planning Policy Statement in accordance with its statutory function described 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”.

Scope

3 This statement is relevant to all uses of land involving the carrying out of any industrial process or research and development into industrial products or processes. It does not, however, deal with other business activities such as retailing, offices, mineral extraction, waste disposal or agriculture.

4 The statement, which applies to Northern Ireland as a whole, supersedes the following provisions of the Department’s September 1993 publication “A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland”:

Policy SP 7 - Economic Development (insofar as it applies to industrial development)

Policy SP 8 - Agricultural Diversification (insofar as it applies to industrial development)

Policy IC 1 - Land for Industry and Business

Policy IC 2 - Industrial Uses in Small Settlements

Policy IC 3 - Flexibility for Small Rural Projects

Policy IC 4 - Retention of Industrial Land

Policy IC 5 - Economic Diversification

Policy IC 6 - Expansion of Existing Enterprises

Policy IC 7 - Major Industrial Projects

Policy IC 8 - Industries of an Offensive or Hazardous Nature

8 In March 1993 the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland and the Department of Economic Development jointly produced a document entitled “Growing a Green Economy”. This publication emphasised that strategies for the environment and economic development should be closely integrated and mutually supportive. The ability to meet higher environmental standards in a cost effective manner has emerged as an important determinant in international competitiveness. The green image of Northern Ireland is therefore an important factor in promoting economic growth.

Transport Considerations

9 The Department’s October 1995 document “Transportation in Northern Ireland: The Way Forward” accepted as a guiding principle the need to minimise, where possible, the effects of transport on the environment. Transportation planning therefore aims to reduce, where possible, the need for travel and to encourage the use of alternatives to the private car. The Department regards the impact on commuting patterns as an important consideration in future planning decisions. Existing public transport provision and the potential for new provision will also be significant considerations in allocating land for future sources of employment.

Targeting Social Need

10 The Government has established Targeting Social Need as one of its public expenditure priorities. It believes that greater equality and equity can be achieved by improving the social and economic conditions of the most disadvantaged areas and people in Northern Ireland, which in turn should contribute to the healing of community divisions.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

11 The Department has a programme of development plans. These plans cater for the development needs of industry alongside demands from other forms of development, and for protection of the environment. They give industrial developers and local communities greater certainty about the types of development which will or will not be permitted in a given location.

12 Development plans will set out how each city or town will accommodate future development. Limits of development will be defined. Within cities and main towns land will be zoned for principal land uses, including industry, in order to guide development to the most appropriate locations. Within such zoned areas uses ancillary to, and compatible with, the predominant use category are acceptable. In addition the Department may include some “white land” within development limits. This is land which is deemed suitable for development but not zoned for a specific purpose, and which may be suitable for a range of uses. In some places “white land” may provide a reserve of land for industrial development within the lifetime of a plan.

13 The Department will not normally zone land for specific purposes within smaller rural settlements unless there is a clear indication of potential demand, or an especially suitable site. Land within development limits may, however, be suitable for industrial development. Development plans will not normally make provision for industrial development in the countryside outside the development limits of settlements.

14 When preparing plans the Department will consult widely to ensure that all those with an interest have an opportunity to influence plan content. It is important that individual businesses and bodies representing particular industrial sectors let the Department know of their likely development needs over the plan period, so that provisions can be made for an adequate amount and choice of sites for industry. The Industrial Development Board will be consulted at an early stage and requested to supply information on industrial land under its control, including current uses, land available for development and recent take-up. The Board will make its particular requirements in the plan area known to the Department and may assist in site identification. District Councils will also be consulted, not least because of their role in promoting economic development, and will be asked to supply information on the needs of their Districts and views on development locations. The Department will also consult with, and take account of views expressed by the public.

*R*equirements of Industry

15 The locational requirements of industry are a key factor in the preparation of development plans. Industry has always sought locational advantage in response to various external factors. These include:

- ◆ the demands of customers;
- ◆ access to raw materials and suppliers;
- ◆ access to power supplies and telecommunication networks;
- ◆ links with other businesses, particularly those providing specialist services or knowledge;
- ◆ water and sewerage infrastructure;
- ◆ links with research institutions such as universities;
- ◆ workforce catchment areas; and
- ◆ transport considerations.

16 Industry often gives high priority to good access to roads, and sometimes to railways, airports and ports. Topographically, it favours sites which are relatively easy and inexpensive to develop because they are on reasonably flat land without foundation difficulties. Many industries require spacious sites which can accommodate single storey buildings accessible by vehicle. Inward investors coming to Northern Ireland want well designed premises in attractive settings as part of a total quality image. Development plans will take account of these requirements while seeking to achieve wider objectives in the public interest.

Zoning Land for Industry

17 When preparing development plans, the Department will seek to ensure that the land zoned for industrial purposes within the main settlements is sufficient in amount to meet foreseeable needs, based on the take-up patterns experienced in preceding years. It will seek to identify sites which offer a good choice of size and location. The full range of industrial employment, both traditional and new, will be taken into consideration. Government policy places increasing emphasis on private sector provision of industrial land. Accordingly, the Department will endeavour to meet the expected needs not only of the Industrial Development Board and the Local Enterprise Development Unit but also of private sector developers.

18 It is important that the new employment opportunities created by industrial development are accessible to a substantial workforce drawn from all sections of the community. Government policy on Targeting Social Need has focused attention on towns in economically and socially deprived areas, which often have least land zoned, or held in industrial land-banks, because of previous investment patterns. Where this situation has arisen, the Department will seek to redress it by zoning additional land to provide extra development opportunities.

19 In the course of plan making, the Department will make a qualitative assessment of potential industrial sites in terms of their environmental amenity and physical suitability. It will avoid industrial zonings which would cause conflict by damaging sensitive areas such as sites of nature conservation importance or give rise to serious loss of environmental quality in adjoining residential areas. Where previously zoned land has remained underdeveloped for a considerable period the Department will ascertain whether the zoning is still realistic. If it is not, the land will be de-zoned, or allocated for another purpose.

20 Previously developed urban land which is ripe for re-development may provide opportunities for industrial development perhaps in conjunction with other uses. The existence of redundant factory premises and derelict industrial land can be an important resource for the creation of new job opportunities in areas of high unemployment. Such brownfield sites are often well suited to re-development with balanced mixed-use schemes which include an element of industrial development.

21 The Department will encourage new industrial development in locations which minimise the length and number of trips by road and can be served by more energy- efficient modes of transport, such as walking, cycling and use of public

transport. It will give preference to sites which are readily accessible to transport nodes, including bus stops, railway stations, sea terminals and airports. Indeed, potential industrial development sites may exist on disused or under-utilised land adjacent to rail and port facilities.

22 The Department will, where possible, zone for industry, land which is free from physical constraints. Where additional infrastructure and significant expenditure are required to bring sites into commission, the development plan will set out the servicing requirements. Developers may have to contribute to the costs of provision. Sites which will be excessively expensive or difficult to develop will not normally be zoned for industrial purposes.

Large Single User Sites

23 In order to attract and accommodate major inward investment projects, the Department will identify, in regional and sub-regional studies and development plans, a number of large, single-user industrial sites strategically located throughout Northern Ireland. The sites will normally be at least 40 hectares in size and have the following characteristics:

- ◆ easily accessible to the transportation network and a substantial workforce;
- ◆ fully serviced or capable of being serviced at short notice;
- ◆ free from significant obstacles to development and capable of accommodating a broad range of development without adverse environmental impact; and
- ◆ visually attractive.

Monitoring and Review of Industrial Land Provision

24 Industrial land supply will be monitored and formally reviewed as necessary to ensure a continuing stock of suitable land to meet the needs of industry. Where the need for additional industrial land arises prior to the review of a development plan, the Department may propose a formal alteration to the plan. Large, single-user industrial sites may be provided in this way.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

25 Planning permission is required for industrial buildings and uses, even on land zoned for industrial purposes. However, some small-scale extensions and alterations to industrial buildings, and minor operations on industrial land are, in certain circumstances, exempt from this requirement. The rules governing these exemptions are set out in the Planning (General Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 1993. Furthermore, planning permission is not required for low-key industrial activities which are ancillary to the use of a building for another purpose.

*H*omeworking and other Ancillary Industrial Uses

26 Some small-scale manufacturing and service industries are operated by people working in their own homes, for example the manufacture of craft items and foodstuffs or the carrying out of clothing alterations or repairs. Planning permission is not normally required so long as such activities do not affect the overall domestic character of the building. However, if the non-residential use ceases to be ancillary, because the business has expanded, planning permission will be required for change of use. Indicators that a material change of use has occurred include

- ◆ a significant alteration to the appearance of the dwelling;
- ◆ a significant increase in 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.

27 Similar principles apply where a new activity is introduced within a building or site already in industrial use. New activities which are ancillary to the main use may not require planning permission. Where there is significant intensification, alteration in the dominant use, or change to a different type of use, planning permission will be required.

General Criteria for Assessing Industrial Development Proposals

28 The characteristics of industry are continuously changing. Some industrial 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, especially small-scale developments, from rural or residential areas for which they provide employment and services. The Department will not restrict an industrial use solely because it differs from the predominant land use in the locality. Uses of land will be regarded as incompatible with each other if their juxtaposition would cause serious problems for the occupiers of either.

29 All proposals for the development of land for industrial purposes will be expected to meet all of the following criteria:

- ◆ They must be compatible with the character of the surrounding area.
- ◆ They must be compatible with adjacent land uses, especially housing.
- ◆ They must not be likely to cause detriment to valuable areas or features of nature conservation interest or man-made heritage.
- ◆ They must, where possible, avoid the loss of high grade agricultural land
- ◆ They must not result in a significant increase in traffic congestion or be a hazard to road safety.
- ◆ They must not be likely to cause or exacerbate flooding.
- ◆ They must be capable of dealing satisfactorily with any emission or effluent.

30 Where a proposal is found to be acceptable as judged against these criteria, the following detailed planning requirements will have to be met:

- ◆ All buildings should be of a scale, design and finishes appropriate to the locality, particularly where the development would be visible from main roads or other heavily used public areas.

- ◆ Proposals should include details of appropriate treatment of boundaries, means of enclosure, and surfaces within the site.
- ◆ Proposals should provide for areas of outside storage to be adequately screened from public view and neighbouring residential properties.
- ◆ Proposals should make provision for tree and hedgerow retention, supplementary planting and landscape management.
- ◆ Proposals should provide adequate access, car parking and manoeuvring areas.

D *developments Incompatible with Existing Industry*

31 Some proposed developments may be incompatible with industrial 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 an industrial business. Such cases 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. 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.

I *ndustries of an Offensive or Hazardous Nature*

32 Certain industries involve processes or materials which can result in adverse effects on adjacent land uses or the local environment such as pollution, noise, smell, fumes, or dust. Proposals for potentially offensive or hazardous industrial development will be carefully considered to ensure the public would not be placed at high risk. Decisions will be based on the precautionary principle that where there is uncertainty, the protection of the environment will generally be paramount unless there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. There will be an onus on developers to demonstrate that all relevant factors have been taken into consideration and that the proposal represents the least damaging and most effective solution. While many

potential difficulties can be controlled through non-planning legislation, the advice of relevant experts will be sought in the processing of planning applications. Where permission is granted, conditions will be imposed in order to minimise or mitigate the impact of development on the environment.

E **Environmental Assessment**

33 The Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1989 specify certain types of planning application which must be accompanied by a formal statement identifying the likely environmental effects and proposed mitigating measures. Examples include oil-refining and integrated chemical installations. Projects falling into other categories - such as developments in connection with the energy, metal processing, glass manufacturing, chemical, food, textile, leather, wood, paper and rubber industries - require an environmental statement only if the Department considers they are likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of such factors as their nature, size and location. Overall, only a small proportion of planning applications require formal environmental assessment. Further advice on environmental impact assessment is given in Development Control Advice Note 10 published by the Department in 1989.

H **Hazardous Substances**

34 In addition to planning permission some industrial developments may also require consent under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993. 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. Further advice on hazardous substances is given in Development Control Advice Note 12 published by the Department in 1993.

R **Retention of Industrial Land and Buildings**

35 Land and buildings currently or last used for industrial purposes will be assessed to see if it is a vital local industrial land resource which must be maintained, before its release for other purposes is agreed. Planning permission may be

granted for the change of use, or the redevelopment for other uses, of sites or premises last used for industrial purposes where:

- ◆ continued use of the site for industry would be detrimental to the amenities of the surrounding area or give rise to serious environmental problems;
- ◆ the site or buildings are unsuitable for modern industrial purposes;
- ◆ an alternative use would secure the future of a building listed as being of architectural or historic merit;
- ◆ there is an opportunity for re-development or use of a site for a mixed-use development with job creation potential; or
- ◆ the land is required for other purposes as set out in a development plan.

***N**on Industrial Uses on Zoned Industrial Land*

36 It is in the national and local interest to retain adequate industrial site provision. Many industrial uses cannot be easily accommodated other than on zoned industrial land. If land identified as suitable for industrial development is lost to other uses, it may be difficult to make adequate alternative provision for industry. In considering planning applications for other uses on zoned or existing industrial land the need to retain an adequate amount and choice of land for industry in the area will be the overriding consideration. Even where land has been zoned but undeveloped for a considerable time it may not be appropriate to permit development for other uses.

37 Provided a sufficient remaining supply of industrial land is retained in the area some uses not involving the carrying out of an industrial process may be acceptable on existing or zoned industrial land. Such uses are compatible with industry and may be best accommodated on industrial land to avoid conflict with other land uses. These include use for storage or as a distribution centre; builders' suppliers; car and other vehicle sales including showrooms, servicing, and storage, but excluding breaking; training centres; vehicle testing and driving test centres. In some industrial estates, ancillary uses to serve the needs of the workforce, such as banks and cafes, may also be permitted. Retail uses, except for small scale factory shops ancillary to a factory or warehouse, will not normally be permitted.

***E**nterprises on Farm Holdings*

38 The retention of farmers and their families on their holdings is important, not only to retain the social structure of rural areas, but also to maintain the valuable countryside management role performed by the farming community. Changes in agricultural economics have led many farmers to look for sources of income to supplement that derived from farming. The Department will facilitate the process of agricultural diversification by giving favourable consideration to industrial enterprises which are of an appropriate scale and nature, and can be satisfactorily integrated into the rural landscape. Within Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas (as defined in the Rural Planning Strategy and in development plans), diversification proposals will normally be acceptable only where they are contained within visually enclosed areas or involve the re-use of redundant farm buildings.

39 Planning permission may be granted for the re-use of redundant farm buildings for small-scale industrial purposes, provided the Department is satisfied about the following matters:

- ◆ that the building was previously in agricultural use for a reasonable period of time;
- ◆ that it is no longer required for agricultural purposes;
- ◆ that the use can be largely contained within the existing building; and
- ◆ that any alterations to the building are relatively minor and that their design and materials respect its architectural style.

Where permission is given for the conversion of a building which is part of an agricultural holding, permitted development rights for new farm buildings on that holding may be withdrawn.

40 Outside Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas, new buildings for industrial enterprises on farm holdings may be acceptable if they are small-scale and can be satisfactorily integrated into an existing group of farm buildings. A new building separate from any existing group of buildings will be approved in exceptional circumstances only. Such circumstances may include the following:

- ◆ where the proposed use would result in nuisance problems for an existing dwelling;

- ◆ where an additional building would give rise to or exacerbate access or servicing difficulties at the existing group of buildings; or
- ◆ where a location separate from the existing building group would permit the proposed development to be more satisfactorily integrated into the landscape.

41 It should be noted that it is the Department’s policy to restrict accesses onto selected roads which have been designated as Protected Routes - see paragraphs 21 to 32 of Planning Policy Statement 3 - “ Development Control: Roads Considerations.”

Small Off Farm Rural Enterprises

42 The Department recognises the importance of enterprises emanating from the local community in the regeneration of declining 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 despoilation of the rural landscape. The re-use of redundant non-agricultural buildings for industrial purposes will be permitted where

- ◆ the building is genuinely redundant in respect of the use for which it was constructed and/or last occupied;
- ◆ any alteration or extension of the building to accommodate its re-use is in keeping with the character of the building and respects the architectural heritage of the area; and
- ◆ the scale and type of operation can be absorbed into the rural environment without leading to a significant loss of amenity.

43 Where new buildings are required to accommodate a small rural enterprise, the Department will normally prefer them to be erected in settlements. In order to prevent a proliferation of urban-type development, permission will not be granted for new industrial buildings in Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas. The Department will, however, adopt a more flexible approach to the location of small rural industries in the rest of the Northern Ireland countryside. In exceptional circumstances, where there is no suitable land within a settlement, planning permission may be granted for a specific industrial project outside the limits of development, but on land visually associated with the settlement. Sites remote from any settlement will not normally be approved. The project must be a definite proposal for an enterprise which could make a significant contribution to the local economy and not a speculative scheme.

44 Where the exceptional policy outlined in paragraph 43 is applied, the Department will consider options in the following order:

- 1** A minor extension to the existing development limit, subject to amenity and environmental considerations.
- 2** Any site close to the development limit which currently contains buildings or where the site is already in a degraded or derelict state and where the opportunity exists to improve the environment.
- 3** A greenfield site in close proximity to the settlement and clearly associated with it.

Development proposals likely to detract from the setting of the settlement or to contribute to urban sprawl or ribboning would not be acceptable.

45 Planning permission for new industrial buildings in the countryside will normally be subject to conditions

- ◆ regarding the design of the proposed buildings;
- ◆ requiring landscaping of the site;
- ◆ requiring a satisfactory means of effluent disposal;
- ◆ controlling access, external storage and car parking; and
- ◆ controlling the scale and design of development.

Rural Business Use Class

46 The Department will give consideration to introducing a Rural Business Use Class. This concept would entail defining in legislation thresholds beyond which a rural enterprise could not intensify without further express planning permission. It would enable a variety of enterprises to be established in the countryside while limiting the potential risks of damage to amenity. A paper will be produced for public consultation before any such legislation is brought forward.

Major Industrial Projects in the Countryside

47 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. Such projects will be assessed taking account of

- ◆ the contribution of the proposed development to the Northern Ireland economy;
- ◆ the availability of alternative sites; and
- ◆ the environmental effects.

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

***E**xpansion of Rural Enterprises*

48 Many industrial enterprises exist in the countryside. While the expansion of such enterprises may lead to job creation, it can also impact adversely on the environment. Planning permission for the expansion of an industrial enterprise currently located in the countryside may be granted where

- ◆ there is no significant increase in the site area of the enterprise, although minor extensions rounding off of the site may sometimes be acceptable;
- ◆ there are no significant building works - within Green Belts and Countryside Policy Areas, no new buildings (other than minor extensions to existing buildings) will generally be permitted, whereas in the rest of the countryside, new buildings may be permitted provided they are small in scale;
- ◆ the increase in trade would not result in unacceptable traffic levels on nearby roads or a significant increase in the use of an existing sub-standard access; and
- ◆ the new development, together with existing facilities, can be satisfactorily integrated into the local landscape and will not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to nearby properties and to the area generally.

Where proposals for expansion of an industrial 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, expansion may be permitted.

U *nauthorised Development*

49 A breach of planning control occurs when development is carried out without planning permission or when conditions or limitations attached to a planning permission are not complied with. Where there is a breach of planning control affecting an industrial undertaking, the operator will be afforded the opportunity to discuss the situation with officials of the Planning Service. It may be possible to achieve a mutually acceptable outcome. The solution may involve submission of a retrospective planning application or agreement to comply with conditions within an agreed period.

50 If the operator of an unauthorised industrial enterprise expresses a willingness to move the business to another site acceptable to the Department, it may be possible to agree a realistic timetable for relocation which will minimise disruption to the business and avoid any permanent loss of employment. Where agreement cannot be reached and the breach is not rectified, the Department may issue an enforcement notice requiring the breach of planning control to be remedied and specifying the steps necessary to do so.