

Draft Magherafelt Area Plan 2015 (dMAP) – Proposal COU 13 – Transportation Scheme for the Upgrading and Dualling of the A6 between the western end of the Toome Bypass and the junction of the A31 and A6 at Castledawson – Departmental Statement.

At the first pre-Examination meeting on the above Plan held in Magherafelt on 27th August 2008, the Department gave an undertaking to provide a statement on its website by 30th September 2008 to clarify the status of the ‘Road Proposal and Study Area’ identified under Policy COU 13 of dMAP and protected under Policy TRAN 1 ‘Planning Protection for Transportation Schemes’.

A Transportation Scheme (COU 13) for the upgrading and dualling of the A6 between the western end of the Toome Bypass and the junction of the A31 and A6 at Castledawson is identified on Map No. 1 – Countryside, as a road line and a study area and protected through Policy TRAN 1 of dMAP. The scheme was one of a number of proposals contained in the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 published in 2005.

At the time of the publication of dMAP in April 2004, a date for construction of this scheme had not yet been set. However, the Roads Service anticipated that it would likely be scheduled for inclusion in its construction programme within 5 years, subject to satisfactory progress through the statutory processes and the availability of finance. As the exact alignment of the scheme was the subject of investigation, Map No. 1 in dMAP indicated a zone within which the eventual scheme would be located.

As the Plan makes clear, the Department would offer protection within the Study Area in accordance with Policy TRAN 1 until a line for the route had been determined by the Roads Service and endorsed through the statutory processes of the Roads Order.

Since the publication of dMAP, Roads Service has moved to progress the scheme and has identified a preferred alignment for the proposal. This preferred alignment is currently being taken forward independently through the statutory processes contained within the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993. An Environmental Statement, a Notice of Intention to make a Direction Order and Notice of Intention to make a Vesting Order were published by DRD in March 2007.

A Public Inquiry into this proposal was held in November 2007 and the Inspector’s report was received in April 2008. DRD Roads Service is currently considering the recommendations contained within the report.

As the preferred line for this proposal has been determined by the Roads Service and is protected by PPS13 ‘Transportation and Land Use’ - General Principle 8, protection of the wider area identified as the Study Area in Map No.1 is no longer required.

The Department would advise that Policy COU 13 should now be regarded as withdrawn from dMAP.

DoE (NI) Planning Service
30 September 2008