

ANGUS COUNCIL**PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE - 25 APRIL 1996****SUBJECT: NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDELINE
- THE PROVISION OF ROADSIDE FACILITIES ON MOTORWAYS
& OTHER TRUNK ROADS IN SCOTLAND****REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Abstract: This report outlines advice on the provision of roadside facilities on motorways and other trunk roads in Scotland published recently as a National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG) by the Scottish Office. The new guideline establishes the policy context for planning authorities to make positive provision within their development plans for a range of appropriate facilities to serve the needs of travellers bearing in mind the road safety benefits and to consider development applications in the light of those plans and the NPPG. The document also makes clear that authorities should have regard to the likely impact of any new facilities both on the environment and on the economy of local communities. This report comments upon aspects of interest and in particular the implications for the Angus section of the A90 trunk road.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee -

- (i) Note and generally accept the advice contained in the NPPG on the provision of roadside facilities on motorways and other trunk roads in Scotland.
- (ii) Agree that the NPPG will be taken into account in the preparation of appropriate policy statements - Angus and Dundee Structure Plan and Angus Local Plan.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Scottish Office has recently issued a finalised version of the NPPG on the provision of roadside facilities on motorways and other trunk roads in Scotland. A draft guideline on roadside facilities was issued for consultation purposes in November 1994 and following consideration of the various responses received the finalised version has been amended or expanded taking account of a number of the points made. A copy of the NPPG is available for reference at the Members' Lounge, The Cross, Forfar.
- 2.2 This report provides a synopsis of the main points raised and the implications as far as the A90 trunk road is concerned within Angus.

- 2.3 The NPPG replaces various previously published Scottish Office documentation on such aspects as petrol filling stations, service areas on trunk roads, and the provision of motorway service areas in Scotland.
- 2.4 The NPPG provides a policy context within which Structure and Local Plan policy can be established as well as an assessment of development proposals.

3 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

- 3.1 The main aim of the NPPG is to promote improved provision of roadside facilities as a contribution to road safety, to increase competition, extend choice and help make Scottish roads more convenient for both residents of and visitors to Scotland. The guideline covers a range of facilities from simple lay-bys through to comprehensive service areas. The level of facilities should be realistic and relative to traffic flow, operator interest, the economies of the wayside and bypassed communities, infrastructure costs and the environmental character of the route corridor. The NPPG therefore seeks to strike a balance between the requirements of road users, economic development and protection of the environment.
- 3.2 In broad terms therefore the guideline establishes criteria to meet the following:-
1. Planning authorities should make appropriate positive provision in their Development Plans for a range of roadside facilities and should avoid being unduly restrictive unless there are legitimate landuse, environmental, road safety, or traffic management justifications.
 2. Planning authorities, while encouraging commercial opportunities where they can be found in the network, in considering proposals and Development Plans and in planning applications, should have regard to the level and quality of services in local communities and to the likely impact of any new provision on the services currently available.
 3. Planning authorities should complement roadside provision with strategies and detailed plans to harness the resources of wayside and bypassed communities to serve the needs of travellers.
- 3.3 The NPPG also recognises the requirement for the conservation of the natural heritage and in particular the need to take into account international designations such as special protection areas (SPAs), special areas of conservation (SACs), among other European directives; national designations such as sites of special scientific interest or national reserves, the conservation of the built heritage, and the importance in quality of rural development. The NPPG sets forth various general policies as a basis for considering such matters.
- 3.4 One of the main purposes of the NPPG is to deal with locational considerations and there are a range of definitions and a minimum requirements specified for stretches of roads such as motorways, other trunk roads - service areas, other trunk roads - other facilities, together with specific reference to other trunk roads and the A9 policy.

- 3.5 Throughout the NPPG there is particular reference to bypassed settlements and the Secretary of State has reinforced the view that the existing facilities within bypassed communities are of particular importance. This is particularly the case on the A9 north of Perth. The Secretary of State has also indicated the intention to retain the successful "strung bow" road signs in order to inform tourists of attractions of bypassed settlement. There is also an indication that following consultation on road signing policy, that there may be more flexibility in due course particularly with regard to tourist attractions and service facilities.
- 3.6 The NPPG also highlights future action for planning authorities through a number of policy guidelines which should form the basis for further refinement by means of Structure and Local Plan policy.
- 3.7 Similarly in terms of development control, the NPPG considers that the guidelines should be a material consideration in assessing development proposals and indicates the role of the Secretary of State in dealing with such matters. There is an indication that the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Scotland) Order 1992 (GDPO) will be amended in order to reflect the changes arising from the NPPG.
- 3.8 In addition, particularly with regard to motorway service areas, these have been included in the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1988.

4 IMPLICATIONS FOR ANGUS

- 4.1 At present the only stretch of trunk road within Angus (approximately 50 kilometres) is that of the A90 from the Dundee boundary through to Northwaterbridge and the boundary with Aberdeenshire. The NPPG recognises that traffic volumes in many areas of Scotland would not support a commercially viable service area provision. Nonetheless it is recognised from a road safety point of view drivers should have the opportunity of a break at least every 50 kilometres (approximately 30 miles). The need to control turning movements is also important in the interests of road safety. While on the A90 within Angus there are three service stations (Stracathro, Finavon, Tealing), the main provision of facilities is currently provided by bypassed communities of Forfar and Brechin.
- 4.2 Subsequent to the 1988 Tayside Structure Plan, a review of the roadside service policy was undertaken by the Regional Council. Arising from this review and development proposals, planning consent was granted for a roadside service facility including provision for fuel and refreshments but excluding overnight hotel accommodation at Halfpennyburn, on the east side of the Forfar bypass, at the Glamis Road junction. Work has now commenced on the first phase of this project (McDonalds) and will be opening later this year.
- 4.3 The present planning policy basis for Angus is the finalised Tayside Structure Plan (1993) which is currently with the Secretary of State for Scotland. In broad terms the current policy is against further new roadside services on the A90 (T), and reads as follows:

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“On the A9(T) (south of Perth) and A90 (T) planning consents for roadside service developments have been granted. No new roadside services will be permitted adjacent to or taking access from the A9(T), M90, A90(T) outwith the built up area of Dundee or A94.”

- 4.4 However the Secretary of State in his published draft modification of Transport and Communications Policy No. 9 which deals with roadside services, has indicated in the context of the Angus area, that “in relation to other trunk roads and motorways in Tayside, roadside services will be permitted only in accordance with the forthcoming NPPG on roadside facilities”.
- 4.5 It is to be hoped that the publication of this NPPG on roadside services will remove at least one more hurdle for the publication of the final modifications by the Secretary of State to the Tayside Structure Plan.
- 4.6 Although at present the policy promoted by the Structure Plan that no additional roadside services be permitted on the stretch of road through Angus is generally compatible with the advice published by the NPPG, it is open to the Council in reviewing both Structure and Local Plan policy to reconsider this matter.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Director of Law and Administration, Director of Finance and Director of Roads have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The recently published NPPG on the provision of roadside facilities on motorways and other trunk roads in Scotland provides up-to-date national advice on the siting and design of roadside facilities on motorways and other trunk roads in Scotland. The NPPG recognises the importance of facilities provided by existing bypass communities and the need to strike a balance between economic development and the protection of the environment.
- 7.2 The NPPG also provides the guidance for use in both Structure and Local Plan preparation

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

AA/GDP/IAL
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