



National Planning Policy Guideline

NPPG9 - THE PROVISION OF ROADSIDE FACILITIES ON MOTORWAYS AND OTHER TRUNK ROADS IN SCOTLAND

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NPPG9 - THE PROVISION OF ROADSIDE FACILITIES ON MOTORWAYS AND OTHER TRUNK ROADS IN SCOTLAND

introduction

This National Planning Policy Guideline sets out the Government's policy for the siting and design of roadside facilities on motorways and other trunk roads in Scotland. Roadside facilities which the guideline covers range from simple laybys through to comprehensive service areas, allowing for a range of facilities in between. The level of facilities provided should be realistic 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 guideline gives the policy context for planning authorities and potential developers to implement this policy to meet planning, environmental, road safety and traffic management objectives. It is for roads authorities to consider in consultation with planning authorities the extent to which they wish to apply this guideline to the provision of roadside facilities on local roads taking account of the different functions which may be served by these roads. References to the National Roads Directorate are to The Scottish Office Development Department National Roads Directorate.

Figure 1: The Motorway and Other Trunk Road Network

In March 1992 The Scottish Office published the policy document *Roads, Traffic and Safety 1992* which set out the policy background to the development of the national road network. Under this policy, the trunk road network, together with a few non-trunk links, is divided into a core and non-core network. Subsequently, on 1 April 1996, several additions were made to the trunk road network. The current network is illustrated on the Map. There emerged from *Roads, Traffic and Safety 1992* a programme of major improvement schemes, with the emphasis on the core network of strategic routes where the growth of traffic congestion and operational problems are imposing increased costs on industry, commerce and the environment. A complementary programme of 'Route Action Plans' is being undertaken on selected routes and 'Route Strategies' are also being prepared for all trunk roads. These will set out the general principles to be adopted to ensure that an appropriate level of service to the travelling public is maintained along the route and that road safety is improved.



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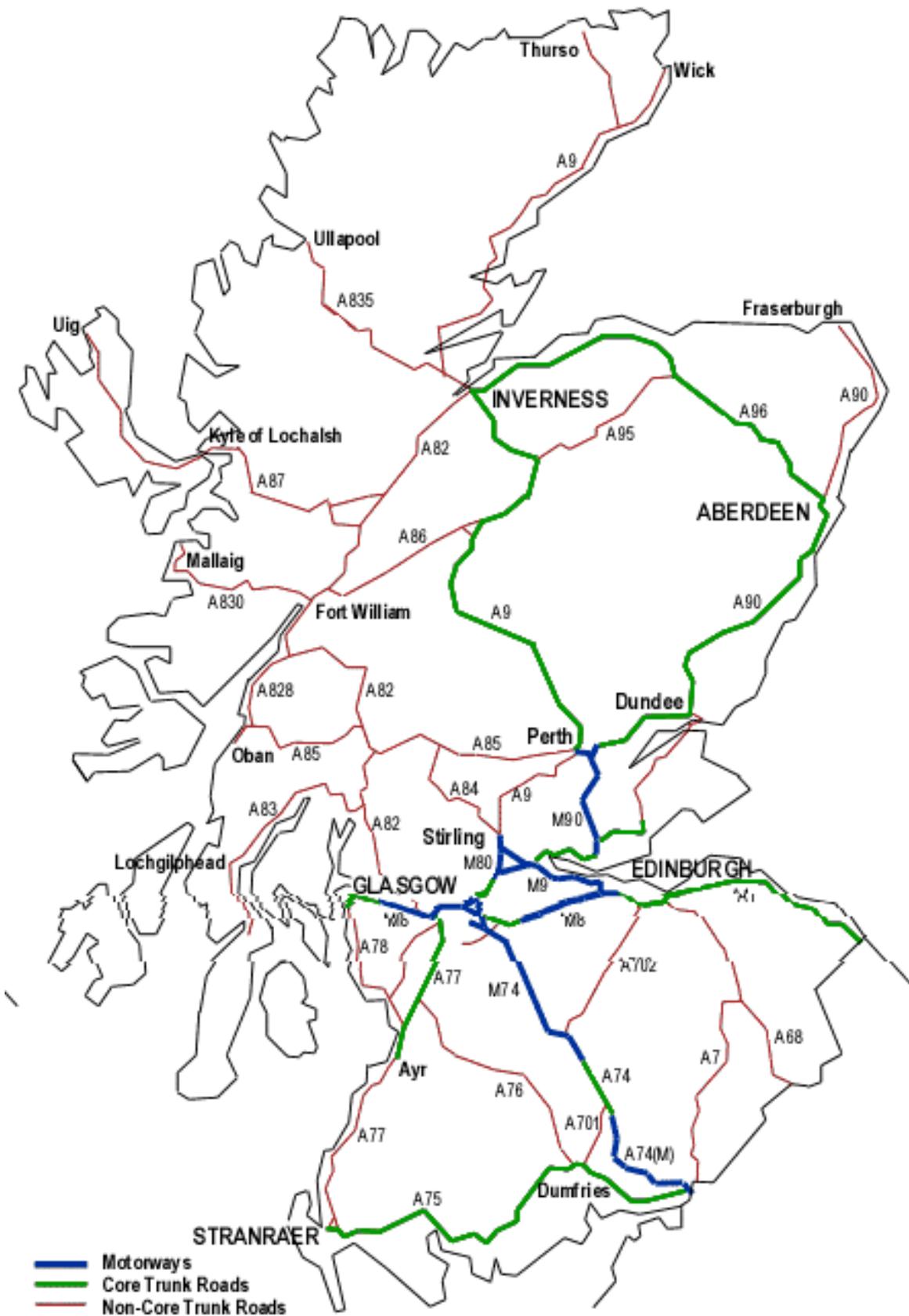
policy context

General

2. The development of Scotland's economic, tourist and recreational opportunities depends on the maintenance of an efficient, safe and convenient transport infrastructure. Potential development adjacent to trunk roads must be assessed against general policy objectives for the trunk road network set out in *Roads, Traffic and Safety 1992*. The White Paper *Rural Scotland: People, Prosperity and Partnership* (Cm3041) also highlights the importance of road safety on the extensive rural road network in Scotland. Tiredness is a significant factor in road safety particularly on "long haul" routes and road users should have opportunities at reasonable intervals to stop for rest and to obtain essential services. The Government therefore aims 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. Accordingly, planning authorities should have regard to National Road Directorate's objectives to ensure:

- **good accessibility for long distance strategic traffic on reliable inter-urban road links to all parts of Scotland where significant economic activity (including tourism) exists or could be expected to develop;**
- **the efficiency of the network allowing for roads with different functions and varying capacities, and traffic of different types and purposes;**
- **improvements in road safety;**
- **the provision of services to cater for the increasing volume of traffic;**
- **the conservation and enhancement of the environment including reducing the rate of traffic growth and mitigating the environmental impact of transport; and**
- **value for money.**

MAP : TRUNK ROAD NETWORK



Sustainable Development

3. In relation to transport, *Sustainable Development, The UK Strategy* (Cm 2426) highlights four characteristics of a sustainable transport framework. It should:

- **strike the right balance between serving economic development and protecting the environment;**
- **provide for economic and social needs with less travel;**
- **reduce the environmental impact of transport and the rate of traffic growth; and**
- **ensure realistic costing of transport decisions.**

4. The above principles should be taken into account in considering specific proposals for individual sites. While a sustainable transport strategy implies the emergence of development patterns designed to reduce dependence on transport and particularly on the private car, the existing settlement and land use pattern will generate road traffic in considerable volume for many years to come. Whereas sustainable transport policy may affect future decisions on road construction and improvement, existing road users deserve a high quality level of service. If roadside services avoid traffic making unnecessary detours in search of facilities, and provided they do not become destinations in their own right thereby creating additional traffic, then they contribute to sustainable objectives.

5. Planning authorities in defining opportunities for service areas and other facilities on trunk roads should take into account the provisions of Scottish Office Circulars and National Planning Policy Guidelines. Where appropriate Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland should be consulted in this process. If the development has potential implications for water quality e.g. potential run-off from parking areas, The Scottish Environment Protection Agency should also be consulted.

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policy guidelines

General

6. The principal aim is to enable the private sector to identify and meet the market demand for the provision of high quality commercial facilities equal to the best in Europe in an environmentally acceptable manner. Even though vehicles today can travel longer distances without refuelling there may be deficiencies, for example in catering, toilets, emergency telephones, rest areas or parking for heavy lorries on particular stretches of the network. A strategically located and well designed service area can remedy such deficiencies where demand supports its provision. It will usually be for the local authorities in partnership with public and other local bodies and the private sector to identify such a demand and to initiate a process to meet it. In new road schemes, it is desirable that facilities be designed into the scheme from the start, while elsewhere newly identified sites will form the basis of provision. A secondary aim is to identify stretches of road where there is a need for facilities but insufficient market demand to support private sector roadside development. In these areas less comprehensive facilities for the safety and comfort of road users should be provided at the roadside. The bypassing of large and small communities can divert trunk road users away from the facilities they provide. In considering and encouraging proposals for commercial developments on the network, planning authorities should have regard to the level and quality of services in wayside and bypassed communities and to the likely impact of any new development on the services currently available. Facilities in local communities should be coordinated, promoted and signposted to provide an effective service to the road user. This guideline establishes criteria to meet both aims. Accordingly:

- **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 land use, environmental, road safety or traffic management justifications.**
- **Planning authorities, while encouraging commercial opportunities where they can be found on the network, in considering proposals in 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.**
- **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.**

Conservation of the Natural Heritage

International Designations

7. Proposals likely to affect significantly those areas classified or proposed for classification under the EC Directives on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Special Protection Areas, SPAs) and the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna (Special Areas of Conservation, SACs) are covered by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. Circular 6/1995 *Habitats and Birds Directives* gives advice on the implementation of these Directives. As a matter of policy, the Government considers that similar treatment should be afforded to sites designated under the Ramsar Convention 1975 relating to Wetland Sites of International Importance. The

impact of development outside these areas, possibly also including currently Permitted Developments, may need to be taken into account.

Accordingly within these areas or in areas likely to adversely affect them:

- **Roadside facilities should only be permitted if the development does not significantly adversely affect the habitats or species being safeguarded or in circumstances where there are no alternative solutions and there is an overriding public interest such as reasons of public health and safety.**

National Designations

8. Within national areas of landscape and nature conservation interest, Government policy seeks to protect, wherever possible, the environmental assets represented by the designations. Development proposals must be reconciled with conservation interests. Accordingly, the Government believes that particular care should be taken in assessing all development proposals located in or affecting such areas; and that the criteria for allowing development to proceed are only likely to be met in exceptional circumstances. Protection is further afforded through the consultation and notification procedures involving Scottish Natural Heritage and the Secretary of State. Environmental designations of national importance include:

- a Site of Special Scientific Interest or National Nature Reserve;
- a National Scenic Area, Natural Heritage Area, Environmentally Sensitive Area, or Regional Park.

In addition the Secretary of State attaches great importance to the need to preserve and enhance green belts and the need to establish confidence in their permanence. However some green belts are extensive in area and are traversed by trunk roads where there may be a demand for roadside services.

Accordingly within these areas:

- **Development should only be permitted where:**
 - **it can be demonstrated that the underlying objectives and overall integrity of the designated area will remain largely unaffected; or**
 - **any adverse effects on the environmental qualities for which the site has been designated are outweighed by the national benefits that will accrue from the development.**

In this context national benefits would relate to the level of service afforded to travellers on the trunk road network. Lack of any alternative services for more than 24 kilometres in both directions from the site (i.e. a gap of over about 50 kilometres), together in the case of trunk roads other than motorways, with the clearly demonstrable lack of any facilities in communities along or adjacent to the route, or of any alternative site in a suitable location with lesser environmental impact, may then justify development but only if any potential damage to the conservation interest in question is avoided or appropriately mitigated. In such circumstances it is essential to ensure high quality small scale development designed to the highest standards, both of fit in the landscape and of materials, form and massing.

Conservation of the Built Heritage

9. The Government is committed to the preservation of important features of the nation's built heritage for the benefit of future generations. The effects of development of roadside facilities on features of the built heritage should be minimised and wherever possible avoided. Proposals affecting a scheduled monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 require the prior written consent of the Secretary of State. Policy should be based on the following principle:

- **Regard must be had to the statutory obligations on developers undertaking works likely to affect a scheduled monument, listed building and/or conservation area and their settings.**

10. Development may damage or destroy structures and remains of archaeological interest, hitherto unrecorded or not afforded the protection of scheduled monument status under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. In cases where unscheduled monuments are likely to be affected and to take account of the possibility of unrecognised archaeology, the guidance contained in *NPPG5: Archaeology and Planning* and the advice in the related PAN should be followed.

11. The importance and value of historic gardens and designed landscapes* to the built heritage is now recognised. As well as being of interest in their own right, they may provide the setting for listed buildings and/or contribute to the character and significance of conservation areas. Developments likely to affect such areas are subject to consultation with Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage. Therefore:

- **Consideration should be given to the likely impact of roadside facilities on historic gardens or designed landscapes and their settings.**

*(see "An Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland", a report by Land Use Consultants to Countryside Commission for Scotland and Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate, SDD, July 1987, currently being updated)

Quality in Rural Development

12. All new development in rural areas, including service areas and other roadside facilities, should be sensitively related to existing settlement patterns, to the historic, wildlife and landscape resources and to the landscape quality of the area. As well as maintaining and enhancing the environment, development should benefit the rural economy. Accordingly:

- **Building in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or from areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled. All development should be designed to fit in the landscape, be constructed of materials in keeping with the local environment and exhibit high standards of landscaping.**

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locational considerations

Motorways

13. Directly accessed Motorway Service Areas (MSAs) have been centrally planned and controlled since the introduction of motorways in Scotland, while others have been provided by the private sector adjacent to existing motorway junctions. Intervals between existing MSAs vary but are generally not more than about 50 kilometres which remains a desirable maximum. The view of the Government is that road users should not be required to travel on motorways for long distances at any time of day without finding an MSA. MSAs contribute to road safety by allowing drivers regular opportunities to rest in the course of their journeys. The Secretary of State will rely on the planning authorities to formulate policies to permit and promote suitable developments in appropriate locations and on the private sector to lease and acquire sites. Following wide consultation it is now Government policy:

- to promote more MSAs while leaving it to the local authorities, public bodies and the private sector to identify opportunities, and to the private sector to acquire sites and seek consent from planning authorities;
- to require, in the interests of the free flow of motorway traffic and general road safety, that a new MSA, whether accessed directly from the motorway or via an interchange, should not be less than 24 kilometres from the nearest existing MSA (or approved proposal for a new MSA).

Issues of market demand and of planning and environmental policy will influence the practicable spacing in each case and particular justification will be required for any proposal with spacing below 24 kilometres. In addition, to ensure land use planning, environmental, road safety and traffic management objectives, MSAs should meet the **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS** in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: For a **MOTORWAY SERVICE AREA** the **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS** operators must meet are that:

- the facilities provided are as set out in **Figure 4: SERVICE AREA DEFINITION**. While developers may often wish to provide a higher level of facilities than the minimum required, any land uses on the site which are not primarily to meet the reasonable needs of travellers will change the nature of the development. Such developments will be considered by the planning authority against their development plan policies and by the Secretary of State against his general policy for access to motorways and other trunk roads. To ensure that this policy is maintained consultation arrangements as detailed at paragraph 32 will be put in place.
- all the services mentioned in **Figure 4: SERVICE AREA DEFINITION** should be provided on both sides, or if on one side only, connected to the other by an overbridge or underbridge incorporating adequate sight lines, entry and exit splays and safe gradients. If the overbridge or underbridge is for pedestrians only, there must be an adequate parking area and fuel supplies on each side of the road;
- there is no sale of alcohol on the site;
- sufficient parking should be provided for 0.5% of the predicted light vehicle flow, 0.35% of

the predicted heavy vehicle flow, and, for coaches, 0.1% of the predicted heavy vehicle flow, all measured as a proportion of the annual average daily traffic flow 15 years after opening.

The predicted traffic flows are those provided on application to the National Roads Directorate. Developers will not necessarily be required to provide the full 15 year parking levels as soon as the site opens, but will be expected to achieve planning permission in respect of land able to accommodate the whole 15 year figure, have legally enforceable rights to acquire the necessary land to build up to the final provision in 5 year stages, and have a landscape setting and development framework capable of accommodating the phased development. If experience differs significantly from these assumptions, earlier provision of adequate parking may be required. At sites accessed from junctions, it may also be necessary to consider the effects of non-motorway traffic on parking requirements.

The National Roads Directorate will maintain its strict policy of restricting accesses to the motorway. Safe and clear accesses conforming fully to national standards are an essential part of any MSA development bearing in mind that motorists will be accustomed to motorway driving conditions. It will be particularly important to avoid the risk of congestion or interference with the free flow of traffic on the main carriageway. Locations will require to take account of satisfactory weaving distances in relation to existing or proposed motorway junctions. MSAs should not be used as routes from the motorway through to other nearby developments or act in any way as junctions between the motorway and the all purpose road network. At sites accessed directly from the motorway any rear access roads connecting to the local road network will require to be restricted to staff, deliveries and the emergency services.

Road safety audits will be required for service area developments and these factors will be taken into account by the audit team. The National Roads Directorate will not sign developments where the access arrangements could create a threat to safety or traffic flow. The cost of all access roads and signing must be met by the developer.

Other Trunk Roads - Service Areas

14. Other trunk roads will normally afford travellers greater opportunities than motorways to stop en route or make a short diversion to find fuel, refreshment and rest. The requirement for dedicated service provision adjacent to the road is therefore less than for motorways. Provision of dedicated service areas on the core network of trunk roads is seen as desirable though on a lesser scale in terms of frequency, size and facilities than for motorways. The scale and frequency for an appropriate level of provision may be affected by existing services in wayside and bypassed communities and by existing or proposed rest and picnic areas on the trunk road. On the core network and in other locations where there is a high volume of lorry traffic, there may be a need for overnight lorry parking. Such parking should be secure, well located in relation to overnight accommodation for the drivers, and located so that the operation of refrigeration equipment, for example, is not a noise nuisance to neighbouring land uses. Light pollution should also be avoided. While service areas with overnight accommodation may satisfy these requirements, other facilities may be provided in urban areas with good access to the trunk road network. Such facilities could be charged for.

15. Planning authorities in consultation with the communities concerned should prioritise the relative roles of roadside and community-based facilities. Currently towns and villages on trunk roads may provide services to road users but different services may not be close together, may not be open 24 hours daily or have advertised regular reliable opening hours, and local congestion may make them difficult to reach. Although attracting trunk road traffic into bypassed towns and villages may commercially benefit some trading outlets and be a key element in the economic viability of the settlement, such traffic may create undesirable environmental effects and raise road safety issues. The growth of tourism and population has caused traffic congestion in some settlements and while traffic management may offer a more sustainable solution than building separate service areas, attracting bypassable traffic, if not planned for, could aggravate those undesirable effects

that the bypass was intended to remove. A further problem may occur if traffic has to make right turns on or off the bypass otherwise that at a roundabout or grade separated junction. Planning authorities will have to assess the opportunities and potential problems and devise appropriate policies for positive provision.

16. There is a presumption against development requiring access from sections of non-restricted trunk road (subject only to 60 or 70 miles per hour speed limits). That presumption can only be set aside for roadside facilities within the policy context of this guideline. This requires a balance to be struck between economic, social and environmental factors and the market demand for facilities for travellers while ensuring safety and maintaining a free flow of traffic. In order to maintain a high level of service, particularly for tourist traffic and the long distance traveller, it is Government policy:

- **to provide easily accessible services at suitable intervals while minimising the number and scale of developments seeking direct access to trunk roads, particularly high speed roads.**

Under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972, the Secretary of State has powers to restrict the grant of planning permission where access onto trunk roads is required. In exceptional circumstances, he may also invoke section 69 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to close a dangerous access from a service facility to the trunk road.

17. In general it would not be appropriate for service areas accessible to traffic in the same direction to be closer than 24 kilometres to each other and larger intervals may often be appropriate. However frequent queuing of vehicles on the approaches to existing service areas which cannot be expanded to cope with demand may justify a new service area closer than 24 kilometres to existing ones. The location and siting of these facilities should take into account the **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS** set out in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: On a NON-RESTRICTED stretch of trunk road for a SERVICE AREA as defined in Figure 4: SERVICE AREA DEFINITION the site should meet the following MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

General:

- the siting of the service area should not result in increased traffic problems which would exacerbate existing urban congestion or be to the detriment of safety or the environment;
- siting should minimise the need to make detours off the trunk road;
- full account should be taken of land use policies and of urban conservation interests as set out in Local Plans;
- parking areas provided for other reasons e.g. park and ride or major traffic generators, may be thought suitable for incorporation of service facilities, but unless well designed it may be confusing to the long distance driver to mix with local traffic in this way;
- normal traffic management principles for access, visibility, manoeuvrability on site, proximity to other junctions, etc., should be met;
- design and layout should respect the character and nature of the surrounding urban fabric.

Core Network - Dual Carriageway:

- as for motorway service areas set out in MSA **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS** above;
- any direct access by slip roads off the trunk road should be away from a side road connection, junction or roundabout to permit adequate sightlines and weaving distances;
- the access must be separate from any break in the central reservation to avoid

encouraging traffic to cross the road;

Core Network - Single Carriageway:

- access should not infringe existing overtaking provision;
- a driver's view of direction signs at a junction should not be impeded by service access or signs;
- visibility in either direction from the accesses must be adequate on the trunk road;
- preferably the site should form one of a pair on both sides of the road with the near-side one seen first by approaching traffic.

Non-Core Network

Given the relatively low traffic flows it is less likely that a service area would be viable on the non-core network. Any such proposal should accord with the conditions set out as for single carriageway above, but it is more likely that major facilities will continue to be provided in the towns and villages which are on or adjacent to the trunk road.

18. There may be scope in built-up areas, subject to planning policy for the area, for replacement of badly sited service areas, or for replacement of an obsolete or dangerously sited filling station by a new development elsewhere. The applicant should demonstrate to the planning authority that the interference with the traffic flow at the new site will be substantially less, that the use of the old service station will be discontinued and that the site will be rehabilitated or restored to its previous undeveloped use at the developer's expense. If appropriate, an agreement could be made with the planning authority under Section 50 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972 to cover these matters.

Other Trunk Roads - Other Facilities

19. In many areas of Scotland the traffic volumes will not support an adequate frequency of commercially viable service area provision. It would then be desirable for facilities which constitute less than a service area as defined in **Figure 4: SERVICE AREA DEFINITION** in this guideline to be provided so that drivers have the opportunity of a break at least every 50 kilometres. Such facilities should be provided having regard to service provision on the road and in wayside and bypassed communities, the traffic flows to be catered for, and the overall need. On the core network, service areas may be expected to provide most facilities at suitable intervals and only parking areas with perhaps picnic tables would be necessary between service areas. On the non-core network where service areas may be less frequent, the parking provision may have to support more of the functions with toilets, telephones and some refreshment provision. In these circumstances a combination of less comprehensive provision on the roadside and promotion of facilities in the communities is called for. In addition, whereas a well designed rest area, forming part of a service area, broadens the range of facilities available at a single location, many people may prefer the simplicity of a stand alone rest area.

20. The absolute minimum is provision of laybys. However their proximity to passing traffic and lack of other facilities means they do not provide a high quality rest opportunity. It is therefore desirable for rest areas to be provided set away from the road in a well designed and maintained landscaped setting. Old road alignments bypassed by improvements have proven suitable and successful for this purpose. The Secretary of State's powers under Section 55 of The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 enable him to construct laybys and rest areas on trunk roads but are limited with regard to further facilities. It will be for the planning authority, in consultation with landowners and the private sector, to assess the demand for additional facilities on these sites and promote such opportunities through the development plan. These parking areas can appropriately be provided with picnic tables, toilets, telephones, parking for cars and caravans and might contain children's play equipment. Tourist information (including where appropriate information for climbers and walkers)

should be provided in appropriate locations. Local authorities should take into account the economic benefits which tourists and business travellers bring to their areas when considering investment in facilities such as good quality public toilets. Consultation between local authorities and National Roads Directorate on specific proposals will assist in programming proposals.

21. On the core network new fuel facilities should only in future be available in association with other facilities for travellers i.e. in service areas as defined in **Figure 4: SERVICE AREA DEFINITION**, and not in free-standing filling stations. Elsewhere where there is not the demand for full service areas, filling stations or filling stations with eating facilities may be proposed. Taking into account any service areas that exist or are planned, filling stations should not reduce the interval between fuel points on the trunk road to less than 24 kilometres, unless queuing occurs as described in paragraph 17. Enhancement of existing facilities rather than proliferation will fulfil sustainability criteria provided other policy requirements in this guideline can be achieved.

22. Access should follow the general principles given above for service areas modified as necessary to take account of the particular circumstances of the road and its function in the network hierarchy. Proposals should avoid conflicting manoeuvres on lengths of road which have been designed to provide scarce overtaking opportunities.

Other Trunk Roads - A9 Policy

23. On the reconstructed A9 from Inveralmond (Perth) to Arduilie on the Cromarty Firth the Secretary of State has had a policy of restricting service facilities to those provided in the bypassed settlements. This has been embodied in Structure Plans and extended by some Regional Councils to apply to other trunk roads.

24. Since the A9 reconstruction has been completed the bypassed settlements have adapted their economies to this new role quite successfully. Accordingly, on Wednesday 5 July 1995, Mr. George Kynoch MP, Minister for Local Government and Planning at The Scottish Office, announced that there would be no fundamental change to policy on roadside services on the A9. However, in the interests of road safety, the Government is concerned that there should be suitable opportunities to stop and rest on the route. Accordingly, needs and opportunities for a limited number of non-commercial facilities such as rest areas, toilets and telephones will be identified following a Route Strategy Study undertaken for National Roads Directorate. Consideration will also be given to better roadside signing and information regarding the availability of services in the by-passed communities.

25. Accordingly, it is the intention of the Secretary of State to retain the successful "strung-bow" road signs in order to inform tourists of the attractions of bypassed settlements. Further work following recent consultation on road signing policy has started and will continue to rationalise signs giving directions, highlighting service facilities, and giving information about tourist attractions.

Operating Arrangements

26. The Secretary of State will be advised to agree access to the motorway or other trunk road in the following circumstances :

- where all the services are to be provided and made available as set out in **Figure 4: SERVICE AREA DEFINITION** (it is appreciated that hours of opening cannot be enforced under planning powers but "Services" signs will not be allowed on the trunk road unless this requirement is complied with);
- where the site is sufficiently large to deal with its customers clear of the road and, where reasonably practicable, is designed for one-way working through the service area with fuel pumps sited as near the exit as possible to ensure that waiting vehicles will not stand on the carriageway.

The Secretary of State is prepared to install, at developers' expense, `Services' signs giving

advance warning of service areas. He will however retain his discretion to remove such signs should, in his opinion, any aspect of the operation of a service area be detrimental to the free flow of traffic or to safety on the road network or should the minimum requirements to qualify as a service area not be maintained. Details of these signs have to be agreed with the National Roads Directorate.

27. The Scottish Office believe that an element of competition on site, between different caterers, for example, will lead to improved standards to the benefit of the travelling public. Where traffic volumes do not support competition within a site, an operator may still wish to consider using the resources of the local community in the catering and retail outlets to help in promoting the local economy.

28. The trunk road network exists primarily to cater for inter-urban traffic but the urban areas which it serves are increasingly suffering congestion from the continuing growth of traffic, particularly commuter traffic. Although in line with the principles of sustainable development it is Government policy not to provide increased trunk road capacity to facilitate commuter traffic to congested urban areas, the existence of such traffic must be recognised. A practical measure to reduce car dependency in cities is to provide park-and-ride facilities to attract commuter traffic from trunk roads before it reaches the urban areas. There may be scope for joint use of such sites by providing a range of facilities together with park-and-ride parking such as fuel, toilets, vehicle servicing and tourist information. The provision of parking facilities is a responsibility of local roads authorities and The Scottish Office will discuss with them the initiation and planning of such schemes. It will be important that the separate objectives of the different uses of a jointly used site can be effectively achieved through good design.

Figure 4: SERVICE AREA DEFINITION

A service area, whether on a motorway or other trunk road, is defined for the purposes of this guideline as a development which should as a minimum provide:

- free short term parking for both commercial and private vehicles, including those only wishing to rest and not to use any facilities;
- fuel;
- free toilets;
- a picnic area with picnic tables available during daylight hours;
- all facilities accessible to disabled people; and
- telephones.

Other facilities will be for operators to offer in the light of demand and arrangements made with other bodies e.g. tourist boards, but could be expected to include:

- catering on all sites (not only from automatic vending machines) but not necessarily open during all service area opening hours;
- a retail unit on all sites but not necessarily open during all service area opening hours; it is proposed that provision be limited to a single unit of up to 200 square metres net floorspace to be treated as a maximum prior to planning authorities setting actual limits in development plans dependent on local circumstances, e.g. for service areas in particular locations of national tourist significance more or larger retail units may be permissible where this will not conflict with environmental objectives. All retail activity is to meet the reasonable needs of travellers only.
- tourist information, manned at appropriate times or otherwise available;
- limited vehicle repairs;

- cash dispenser;
- overnight accommodation (which may be particularly desirable for example on the main tourist routes);
- special parking facilities such as secure overnight accommodation for which charging may be appropriate.

In locations on trunk roads near popular climbing and walking access points it may also be appropriate to include facilities providing information or telephone access to local weather forecasts, mountain rescue and similar services.

As a matter of policy it is expected that:

- **these facilities should all be available every day of the year for 24 hours a day on motorways, 16 hours a day on the core network trunk roads and 12 hours a day on other trunk roads.**
- **on trunk roads agreed with National Roads Directorate as being essentially tourist routes these opening hours will apply from 1 March to 31 October but not necessarily in other months with the exception of routes accessing winter sports areas.**
- **all facilities are to be provided primarily to meet the reasonable needs of travellers and the scale of provision should be consistent with these needs.**

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action required

Structure Plans

29. Councils should discuss with the private sector, road user interests, neighbouring structure plan authorities and with the National Roads Directorate, locations on motorways and other trunk roads where there do not appear to be adequate facilities. Developers will be well placed to contribute to assessment of demand for major facilities, but current and forecast traffic levels, the effect of planned road improvements, the facilities currently available in wayside or bypassed communities and the policy context of the structure plan strategy will all be relevant. Cooperation will be required between neighbouring authorities to determine optimum locations especially in areas where suitable locations may be scarce, if realistic provision for motorists is to be made and if developers are to be guided to areas that do least environmental damage and can be well fitted into the landscape.

30. Structure plan authorities should use these Policy Guidelines and the outcome of their discussions with developers, neighbouring authorities and National Roads Directorate to set out in alterations to their plans strategic policies for lengths of motorway and other trunk road. These should:

- **indicate where on the motorway and other trunk road network there are opportunities for service areas;**
- **indicate which lengths of the trunk road network are constrained by environmental and other considerations;**
- **indicate where there is a need for other facilities short of service area provision; and**
- **set out their strategies for enhancing and promoting the facilities in wayside and bypassed settlements to contribute to meeting the needs of travellers.**

Local Plans

31. Local plans should implement the structure plan strategy by identifying opportunities for joint public/private sector initiatives and specific sites within the general strategic locations to meet the detailed Policy Guidelines in this document. They should also set out any design criteria e.g.:

- whether the development will be served directly from the trunk road, from a parallel service road, or in a wayside or bypassed settlement;
- whether improvements are required to any existing facilities;
- whether bridges or subways are appropriate;
- how the buildings should fit in the landscape and their relationship to other natural features and the built environment;
- the degree of landscaping required for the parking areas; and
- the scale and massing of the development within its setting.

Sites should be designed so as to minimise their impact on the surrounding area in terms of local ecology, visual intrusion, noise and vehicle emissions. Sites for other facilities should also be identified with an indication of how these are to be implemented. Local plan policies should therefore:

- **identify specific sites for new or improved facilities in accordance with the strategic framework; and**
- **set out design guidance and operational criteria.**

Development Control

32. Planning authorities faced with applications for roadside facilities should, prior to the provision of a development plan policy context, consider the policy in this guideline as a material consideration, as will the Secretary of State in cases which come before him. In order for the Secretary of State to operate his policy regarding developments affecting existing and proposed MSAs, The Scottish Office Development Department will seek to amend the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Scotland) Order 1992 (the GDPO) to require that, before granting planning permission, the planning authority must consult the Secretary of State in respect of any such development and that the Secretary of State must be consulted when a development is proposed which includes service facilities such as refreshments, fuel or parking wholly or partly within 400 metres of the boundary of a motorway, or which comprises an area exceeding 2 hectares and includes the provision of fuel and refreshments within 1 km of a motorway junction. It remains the case that any such development within 67 metres of a trunk or special road, which a planning authority propose to approve contrary to the recommendation of the Secretary of State, has to be notified to The Scottish Office Development Department.

33. Motorway Service Areas have now been included in Schedule 2 to the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 1988. When a planning authority receives a planning application it should consider whether there are likely to be significant environmental effects, and if so, require an Environmental Assessment to be undertaken. Further guidance, including indicative criteria to assist in deciding whether a project requires environmental assessment, is given in The Scottish Office Environment Department Circular 26/1994. For non-motorway service areas, their likely effects on the environment should be considered through normal planning procedures, taking full account of relevant development plans and consulting expert bodies and agencies as appropriate.

Revocations

34. Scottish Development Department Circular 27/1965 *Petrol Filling Stations*, paragraphs 2 to 7, Scottish Development Department Circular 24/1968 *Service Areas on Trunk Roads*, and The Scottish Office Industry Department Circular 11/1992 *The Provision of Motorway Service Areas in Scotland* are hereby revoked.

Enquiries

35. Enquiries on Planning matters should be referred to:

Tom Williamson
 Assistant Chief Planner
 Room 2-H77
 Planning Services Division 2
 The Scottish Office Development Department
 Victoria Quay
 Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Telephone 0131-244 7531

36. Enquiries on Roads matters should be referred to:

Ian Ross
Network Manager
National Roads Directorate
The Scottish Office Development Department
Room 1-D72
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Telephone 0131-244 0482

37. Further copies of this guideline and a list of current NPPGs may be obtained from Planning Division, The Scottish Office Development Department, Room 2-H42, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ ((0131- 244 7066).

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