



Footways - Prohibition of Waiting

RTPI NI Response to the Draft Order

March 2023

The Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) proposes to make an Order entitled The Footways (Prohibition of Waiting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023. The Order will prohibit vehicles from waiting on a footway adjacent to a bus lane, a bus stop, a bus stand, a mandatory cycle lane and a mandatory school keep clear. The Order will also revoke and re-enact the prohibitions of the Footways (Prohibition of Waiting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015. Vehicles are excepted from the prohibitions in certain circumstances.

RTPI NI Response

The Royal Town Planning Institute in Northern Ireland (RTPI NI) is supportive of this draft Order. Legislation which supports the use of sustainable options, such as public transport and active travel, by improving its visibility, accessibility and safety, are to be applauded and promoted. Parking or waiting next to bus stops can impede a bus driver from pulling in parallel to the kerb, making ramp deployment impossible for wheelchair users. Parking and waiting adjacent to school keep clear signs can restrict visibility of school children trying to cross. Waiting adjacent to cycle lanes has the same impact of restricting visibility and reducing road safety. Therefore, the introduction of a Prohibition of Waiting Order would help to protect the most vulnerable road users and public transport users.

However, in addition to this Order, there also needs to be more consideration given to policies which reduce private car use and promote connectivity by sustainable transport provision, including walking, cycling and public transport. The Regional Development Strategy 2035 sets out the importance of reducing reliance on the private car and increasing “opportunities for walking, cycling, or taking public transport”. If we are to address NI’s net zero targets, there is a growing need to “adapt the existing transport network to facilitate the modal shift away from the car. The car may be essential for some journeys, but its social and economic value needs to be weighed against its impact on the environment. The way existing transport is used needs to be looked at to favour modes of transport that allow reduction of Northern Ireland’s carbon footprint.”

RTPI NI believes that car parking and waiting issues cannot be considered in isolation and must be viewed holistically as part of a wider strategy to create sustainable, well connected places that are highly accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. This should be part of a wider approach tackling climate action, social equity, and health and wellbeing in our towns and cities through promotion of active travel and public transport.