



Report on Walking routes in Omagh Town Centre

October 2013

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## **About us**

Imtac is a committee of disabled people and older people as well as others including key transport professionals. Our role is to advise Government and others in Northern Ireland on issues that affect the mobility of older people and disabled people.

Our aim is to ensure that older people and disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else to travel when and where they want.

Imtac receives support from the Department for Regional Development.

## **About this report**

This report is the sixth in a series of reports compiled by Imtac looking at the accessibility of key walking routes for disabled people and older people in locations across Northern Ireland.

The report was compiled following an inspection of Omagh in August 2013. It considers the provision of pedestrian facilities in the town measured against accepted accessibility standards<sup>1</sup>. The report identifies potential barriers for disabled people and older people and recommends how these barriers could be resolved. The report also highlights examples of good practice. A key aspect of the report is linkage between the pedestrian environment and the bus station in Omagh. We have produced two reports, a text only version and a version with photographs used to highlight barriers and good practice.

## **Our findings**

Omagh has benefitted recently from significant investment in public realm. As a result of this investment significant improvements have been made to Bridge Street, High Street, Market Street and Scarffe's Entry. In general this work has been done to a high standard, providing well designed and frequent crossing opportunities, broad and high quality pavements with furniture in located in lines. The design and details such as the inclusion of visibility strips on street furniture suggest that disabled people were consulted during the development of the public realm project.

Whilst the areas of the town that have benefitted from investment in public realm have undoubtedly been improved, Imtac has concerns about the use of significant numbers of Zebra crossings in these areas. Whilst Zebra

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<sup>1</sup> For the most comprehensive guidance see [Inclusive Mobility \(Department for Transport 2005\)](#)

crossings do work for many pedestrians they do not offer the same certainty and security for people with a visual impairment that it is safe to cross as other controlled crossings such as Puffin and Pelican crossings.

Despite the improvements there remain a number of issues that create barriers for pedestrians in Omagh. The majority, but not all, of these issues affect areas of the town which have not benefited from the investment in the public realm. Many of these issues are consistent with issues highlighted in a report<sup>2</sup> compiled by Imtac around common barriers encountered by disabled people and older people in the pedestrian environment. These include:

- The absence of dropped kerbs, providing step free access around pavements
- The absence of tactile paving at junctions and crossings
- Poor or incorrect installation at crossings
- Clutter on pavement including A-boards and shop displays
- Poor quality of pavements and walking surfaces
- Problems caused by illegal parking on pavements

Specifically relating to Omagh work is now required to address issues identified in this report relating to Kevlin Avenue, John Street and the eastern end of Market Street.

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<sup>2</sup>[Highlighting barriers in the pedestrian environment - Report into issues, good practice and recommendations \(Imtac 2012\)](#)

## Audit of key routes

### Bus Station/Mountjoy Road

- 1 There is a good example of a Zebra crossing at the entrance/exit to the bus station on Mountjoy Road.



- 2 A-boards present potential hazards on the pavement across the road from the bus station.



## Bridge Street

- 3 There is a controlled crossing at the entrance to the bus station on Bridge Street. The tactile paving and control boxes are incorrectly installed.



- 4 There are dropped kerbs along Bridge Street towards the town centre. However no tactile paving has been provided.



- 5 Over the bridge there is an entrance to Market Square on the eastern pavement. Although the pavement is flush with the entrance, tactile paving should be provided as a warning of potential vehicle movements in the area.



- 6 On the western pavement there is a pedestrian entrance to the Strule Arts Centre. The types of paving materials used are not ideal for some disabled people including wheelchair users. Bollards and lighting columns have no clear visibility strip and present a hazard to people with a visual impairment as do steps in the area that have no corduroy hazard paving to indicate their presence.



- 7 Stepped access to the Arts Centre does include corduroy hazard paving.



- 8 There is a level and flat alternative walking route to the Arts Centre and bollards in the area have a strong visibility band. However other surfaces and seating in the area are not ideal for some disabled people.





- 9 The pavement along the remainder of Bridge Street towards High Street is of good quality and free of obstruction.



- 10 There is a zebra crossing at the end of Bridge Street with the junction of High Street. Non-standard tactile paving has been used.



- 11 The pavement on the northern side of High Street (towards the courthouse) is of good quality and width. Street furniture has been placed in a line towards the kerb.



- 12 Efforts have been made to make the chrome materials used for seating more visible.



- 13 There is a good example of an in-line uncontrolled crossing across High Street. Non-standard tactile paving has been used.



- 14 Vehicle entrances give pedestrians priority.



- 15 There is an uncontrolled crossing across High Street outside the Courthouse. Bollards on the Courthouse side require a stronger visibility strip.



- 16 On the Southern side of High Street (near the Courthouse) the pavement is of good quality with furniture in a line.



- 17 A-boards and clutter increasingly become a problem on the southern pavement approaching the town centre.



- 18 Floral displays and clutter narrow pavement widths and create obstacles around the controlled crossing across High Street at the junction of Bridge Street.



- 19 There is a Zebra crossing across High Street. Non-standard tactile paving has been used.



- 20 There is a good example of an inline uncontrolled crossing further along High Street. Again non-standard tactile paving has been used.



- 21 There is a Zebra crossing on High Street at the junction of Street/Scarffe's Entry. Non-standard tactile paving has been used. Market



### George's Street

- 22 There is an inline uncontrolled crossing at the junction of George's Street and High Street (beside Courthouse). Non-standard tactile paving has been used and a parked car blocks access to one side of the crossing.



- 23 The pavement alongside the Courthouse on George's Street is restricted by a line of security bollards. These bollards include a clear visibility strip.



## John Street

- 24 The pavement in John Street is narrow. Width is further reduced in places by A-boards and shop displays.





- 25 There are four uncontrolled crossings at the junction between John Street and Kevlin Road. The tactile paving is non-standard and should be two rather than one slab deep at all the crossings.



### Kevlin Avenue

- 26 There is no tactile paving at the entrances to the Roads Service car park on Kevlin Avenue.



- 27 There is good example of a raised in-line uncontrolled crossing across Kevlin Avenue at the DSD offices.



- 28 On the northern side of Kevlin Avenue there is no dropped kerb at the entrance to Iceland.



- 29 There is a step free route along the southern pavement of Kevlin Avenue.



- 30 There is a good in-line uncontrolled crossings across Kevlin Avenue providing access to the lane between Kevlin Avenue and High Street.



- 31 The pedestrian surface on the northern side of Kevlin Avenue in this location is in poor condition.



- 32 There is no step free access to Main Street shopping centre on the northern side of Kevlin Avenue as the kerbs have not been dropped on the shopping centre side.



- 33 There is step free access via the southern pavement and a good inline controlled crossing. However A-boards provide obstacles on the western side of the crossing.



- 34 There is a service yard entrance on the Northern pavement beside Main Street shopping centre. Although level with the pavement tactile paving should be provided to warn people of potential vehicle movements.



- 35 There is a good in-line uncontrolled crossing across Kevlin Avenue between the public toilets and the Roads Service car park. Non-standard paving has been used on the western side and does not provide sufficient contrast with the surrounding pavement.



### Scarffe's Entry

- 36 There is a good example of an in-line uncontrolled crossing across Scarffe's entry at the junction with Kevlin Avenue. Non-standard tactile paving has been used and does not provide sufficient contrast with the surrounding pavement.



- 37 There are two further reasonable examples of in-line uncontrolled crossings across Scarffe's entry further along the street. Non-standard tactile paving has been used and does not provide sufficient contrast with the surrounding pavement.



- 38 A car parked at a vehicle entrance blocks the pavement on the western side of Scarffe's entry.



- 39 There is a Zebra crossing on Scarffe's Entry at the junction with High Street and Market Street. Non-standard tactile paving has been used.



## Market Street

- 40 The pavements on the southern pavement of Market Street are good quality, broad and generally clutter free.





41 There are two good examples of in-line uncontrolled crossings across Market Street. Non-standard tactile paving has been used.



42 A vehicle parked on the pavement close to the junction with Dublin Road presents a potential hazard.



- 43 There is a good controlled crossing across Market Street at the junction with Dublin Road. However an A-board is an obstacle. Non-standard tactile paving has been used.



- 44 There is a controlled crossing across Dublin Road. The control box on the eastern side is mounted too high on a lighting column and too far from the tactile tail.



- 45 The southern pavement on Market Street has a significant crossfall after the bridge. This is an obstacle for some disabled people including wheelchair users.



- 46 There is an in line uncontrolled crossing at the junction with Campsie Drive. The tactile paving is in need repair.



47 There is a good example of a controlled crossing across Market Street.



48 Heading back towards the town centre on the northern pavement there is no provision, such as dropped kerbs, for crossing made at the junction with Campsie Avenue.



- 49 The pavement on the northern side of Market Street is in a poor state of repair in places.



- 50 Vehicle entrances do not provide pedestrians with priority and no tactile paving has been provided.



- 51 Building work restricts pavement width and has damaged tactile paving around the junction between Market Street and Drumragh Avenue.



- 52 A good example of a controlled crossing is in place at the junction of Market Street and Drumragh Avenue. Non-standard tactile paving has been used on one side.



- 53 There are good quality, wide pavements on the northern pavement of Market Street towards the centre of town. A-boards present an obstacle but are located in the furniture line.



## Next steps

Imtac has previously been involved in a similar audits of pedestrian facilities in Belfast City Centre<sup>3</sup>, Lisburn<sup>4</sup> and Bangor<sup>5</sup>. Following the publication of the reports meetings were held with Roads Service to identify actions to address the barriers identified. Actions were identified as achievable in the short term, medium term and the longer term.

The Committee proposes that a similar approach is taken in Omagh. Following the publication of this report we will seek to meet with Roads Service to identify achievable actions to address the barriers identified in the report. We will also highlight some issues highlighted in the report which are not the responsibility of Roads Service to other stakeholders including Omagh District Council We will seek to involve local organisations of and for disabled people in these discussions.

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<sup>3</sup> Belfast Streets Ahead Quality Walking Corridor Review (Aecom 2010)

<sup>4</sup> Report on walking routes in Lisburn City Centre (Imtac 2013)

<sup>5</sup> Report on walking routes in Bangor town centre (Imtac 2013)