



Environment and Transport Select Committee
15 September 2011

Update on Freight Initiatives

Purpose of the report: Policy Development and Review

This report provides an update to the Committee on the approach taken in addressing freight issues in Surrey.

Introduction:

- 1 A report on Freight Initiatives in Surrey was presented to the Transport Select Committee in June 2008. Since then a number of developments in the Freight Industry have opened up new opportunities for addressing long-standing freight related issues.
- 2 Freight forms one of the key strategies of the Surrey Transport Plan (the Third Local Transport Plan) that was published in April this year. This followed a report to Cabinet on 1st March 2011, which included a summary of the Freight Strategy. In preparation of the strategy, freight issues were the subject of two meetings of the Local Transport Plan Member Task Group, and a Member Seminar.
- 3 Freight deliveries play a vital role in supporting the economy of Surrey. The aim of the Freight Strategy is to assist in the effective transportation of goods whilst minimising the impact of large goods vehicles on the environment and residents of the county.
- 4 The report focuses on the following freight transport issues:
 - HGVs and the Surrey Priority Network
 - Freight Quality Partnerships
 - The London Low Emission Zone and other initiatives to reduce emissions
 - Satellite navigation systems
 - Bridge strikes
 - Goods Vehicle Operators Licences
 - Rail Freight
 - Freight and New Development

HGVs and the Surrey Priority Network (SPN)

- 5 Along with all other highway authorities Surrey produces a plan for prioritising road maintenance funding which in Surrey is referred to as the Surrey Priority Network or SPN. Whilst this takes account of a range of factors including overall traffic flows, HGV flows feature highly as large vehicles do the most damage to our roads. A review of the SPN is being carried out and this revised network will effectively provide a preferred lorry route network, which is maintained to the highest standard.
- 6 Discussions have taken place with Transport for London who are revising the London Lorry Map and developing an on line lorry route planner. As many goods vehicles bound for London pass through Surrey, the SPN will be linked up with the London lorry mapping to facilitate better longer distance route planning. Discussions have also taken place with other adjoining authorities with a view to extending this facility further.
- 7 A joined up long distance lorry route planner will greatly help to facilitate more effective delivery planning and reduce the number of goods vehicles using inappropriate routes, whether passing through or starting or finishing their journey in Surrey.. The 2012 Olympics in London means that this work is a high priority task for the London Authorities.

Freight Quality Partnerships (FQPs)

- 8 The County Council seeks opportunities to engage with the freight industry, businesses and other authorities to understand the needs and problems of freight transport and to share best practice. Freight Quality Partnerships established in Surrey resulted in improved lorry route signing to town centres and major business areas.
- 9 The County Council has been an active member of the former South London Freight Quality Partnership (FQP). This no longer operates, however the good practice and case studies developed within this and other FQPs is still available to inform further work. Surrey County Council Transportation Development Planning and Smarter and Safer Travel Teams are working within the planning system and the business community to introduce some elements of the good practice developed such as 'Service and Delivery Plans', and 'Construction Logistics Plans'. Monitoring has shown that where these initiatives have been implemented they have led to more cost effective business servicing, and the resulting reduction in delivery mileage has reduced the impact of goods vehicles on the local community.
- 10 The County Council continues to carry out informal partnership activities such as carrying out a business delivery survey, which led to a change in loading restrictions in Farnham. We have also been

working with local residents and members to address inappropriate lorry routeing.

London Low Emission Zone (LEZ) and other initiatives to reduce emissions from HGVs

- 11 The London Low Emission Zone (LEZ) imposes a daily charge on HGVs that do not meet defined emissions thresholds. However, indications are that most lorry operators in London and the southeast have upgraded their fleets to meet the LEZ requirements and very few non-compliant vehicles travel into the zone. This should continue to improve air quality over a much wider area than London alone, especially within the M25 cordon. Surrey's worst air quality areas are located within or around the M25 so should immediately benefit from the London scheme.
- 12 The LEZ system operates through number plate recognition cameras linked to the DVLA database. Vehicles registered before 2001 (which don't meet the Euro III standard) are checked to see if their engines have been modified to meet the standard and if not, are sent a charge notice. Foreign operators who fail to meet the standards are pursued by an international debt agency.
- 13 In 2012 the requirements will be raised to meet the Euro IV standard which relates to vehicles registered from 2005; or the modified equivalent. So, more polluting vehicles in the region will eventually be phased out. The possibility of extending the scheme into areas of Surrey was mooted at the early stages but as the London LEZ has brought forward EU legislation that will in due course apply everywhere all vehicles will have to meet the same standards as the London LEZ soon.
- 14 Other EU and industry led initiatives such as eco driver training and the Freight Transport Association's Logistics Carbon Reduction Scheme will also contribute to reducing emissions from HGVs in the longer term.
- 15 TfL operates a Freight Operators Recognition Scheme (FORS), a charter mark scheme for lorry operators delivering in London. The London FORS provides training and benchmarking to encourage more fuel efficient and safe driving for lorry operators. The scheme currently involves around 20% of the vehicles delivering in London and is increasing, as more London authorities are encouraging operators delivering on council business to join. The scheme has led to a significant reduction in operator's fuel costs, vehicle emissions and road collisions amongst those involved. The scheme benefits Surrey residents through the actions of those members based in Surrey.
- 16 May Gurney, the County Council's Highways Contractor, operates its own driver-training programme, 'SLIM UR CO2', designed to reduce vehicle emissions. May Gurney are also trialing hybrid vans and

retrofitting limiters to its vehicles to reduce fuel usage and address driver behaviours and safety.

Satellite Navigation Systems (Satnav) and inappropriate routeing in rural and residential areas

- 17 Lorry specific Satnav systems, which are set to an individual lorry's dimensions, are now available and becoming widely used by the industry. These systems filter out minor roads unsuitable to large vehicles, which over time will reduce the occurrences of large vehicles using minor inappropriate routes.
- 18 These systems are however only as good as the mapping used to direct vehicles, and there are still many discrepancies to overcome.
- 19 The County Council now has a lorry incident reporting system for residents allowing residents to advise us of incidents of large vehicles getting stuck or inconsiderate driving in narrow lanes or vulnerable areas. We have discussed a process with the largest lorry Satnav producers across Europe to pass on incident reports from Surrey directly to their mapping teams to investigate and if appropriate filter out inappropriate routes from their systems. This will also be of considerable benefit to lorry operators and the efficient movement of freight traffic in the county.
- 20 In the meantime in locations where large vehicles are regularly getting stuck we consider the installation of "Unsuitable for HGVs" signing although this is only advisory.

Bridge Strikes

- 21 Our Road Safety team is currently investigating the causes behind the number of bridge strikes in Surrey. Surrey has had over 70 "rail over road bridges" strikes in the last five years. 10 bridges are struck at least three times a year, one nine times in a year. The rail authorities own these bridges but the county council has a responsibility to ensure that they are adequately signed. We have done considerable research into this recently and any signing errors will be addressed but in general most bridge strikes are a result of driver error and not a deficiency in signing.
- 22 National research suggests that the use of suitably equipped satnav would be the most effective, (and cost effective), means of preventing bridge strikes. Whilst the freight transport industry is aware of this, they cannot force HGVs operators to get this equipment, even though it costs as little as £10 to add such a facility to basic satnav systems.

Goods Vehicle Operators Licences

- 23 Businesses who want to operate goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes must obtain an Operator's Licence ('O' licence) from the Traffic Commissioner, and have to have an operating centre where their vehicles are kept when not in use. The County Council's Planning and Development Group receives a summary of 'O' licence applications. If any applications are considered unsuitable due to highway safety or environmental concerns, then objections may be raised. Where possible, problems are resolved by asking for conditions to be placed on the licence. Where it is not possible to agree conditions with the applicant, and the Traffic Commissioner calls a public inquiry, representations are made by the Planning and Development Group. The County Council has 21 days (including weekends and bank holidays) to consider and to lodge an objection to an application.
- 24 Since 1st January 2010, all County Council Members have been consulted when an application has been made in their Division. As the period for response is so short, there is not enough time in the process to consult either Local Committees or Parish Councils on individual applications. Applications for Goods Vehicle Operators Licences have to be advertised in a local paper and owners or occupiers of property in the vicinity of the site' are invited to raise objection to applications at this time. Parish Councils can subscribe to the 'O' licence notification system 'Applications and Decisions' themselves if they want to scrutinise all applications or they can view them on line.

Rail Freight

- 25 Transferring more goods from road to rail is suitable for some large bulky goods, such as building aggregates. There are a number of railheads and yards in or close to Surrey which are used to distribute these materials and this operation helps to minimise goods vehicle miles within Surrey.
- 26 For most retail goods in Surrey however, shipment by rail would add extra costs for the freight industry and be noticeably slower.
- 27 Shipment by rail has been considered for Surrey's household waste but the current practice of separating waste for recycling would now make this transport option inefficient and impractical.

Freight and New Development

- 28 The county council ensures that the freight initiatives described above are considered and implemented through the planning system by a) advising Surrey's districts on the inclusions of appropriate measures during the preparation of their Local Development Frameworks and b) by recommending appropriate planning conditions to be attached to planning approvals. A typical planning condition is the provision of on

site facilities such as lorry wheel washing and vehicle weighing as part of a planning approval for a new quarry.

Conclusions:

- 29 The movement of goods is a national or international operation and Surrey's location on routes to and from the channel ports and into London makes addressing wider cross border issues particularly important for the residents of Surrey.
- 30 The success of the initiatives described above will generally assist both business and residents by making deliveries more efficient and minimising vehicle mileage and associated vehicle emissions.

Financial and value for money implications

- 31 The approach to freight transport outlined in this report will have benefits for lorry operators and businesses in Surrey, whilst minimising the impact of the environment.

Equalities Implications

- 32 There are no equalities implications.

Risk Management Implications

- 33 There are no risk management implications.

Recommendations:

That members consider and comment on the approach taken in addressing freight issues to date.

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Sources/background papers:

Freight Transport Initiatives 2008 – Report to transport Select Committee, June 2008 –

Surrey's Freight Strategy – A key Strategy of the Surrey Transport Plan, published April 2011. The Freight Strategy is available on the Surrey County Council web site at:

[http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspublications.nsf/591f7dda55aad72a80256c670041a50d/dd930e9e3433a3018025785a005a489e/\\$FILE/12%20STP%20Freight%20Strategy.pdf](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspublications.nsf/591f7dda55aad72a80256c670041a50d/dd930e9e3433a3018025785a005a489e/$FILE/12%20STP%20Freight%20Strategy.pdf)

The London Freight Plan –

London FQPs - <http://www.londonsfqps.co.uk/Home.aspx> - TfL's dedicated website outlining the activities of their Freight Quality Partnerships and a source of downloadable reports on freight related research and case studies.