Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026

Freight Strategy

Wiltshire Council
Where everybody matters

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan

2011-2026

Freight Strategy

March 2011

1 Introduction

Introduction

1.1 The efficient distribution of goods and services is critical for all the basic essentials of everyday life such as food, drink, clothing and fuel. All that we consume, buy or use has at some point been part of this system of distribution. It helps determine market diversity and consumer choice, and in doing so drives the competitiveness, jobs and prosperity of an area or region.

1.2 However, a balance has to be found between the efficient distribution of freight and the effect that this distribution has on the society it serves. There is a need to maintain economic vibrancy and growth, with the realisation that we have to transport our goods and services in the most sustainable way. The council recognises this and takes seriously the need to achieve a more sustainable distribution of freight that balances the needs of the economy, the environment and society.

1.3 Whilst the council recognises the need to achieve a more sustainable distribution of freight and to support the priority theme of climate change, it should be recognised that the overwhelming majority of freight distribution within the county is made by road, and that this is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future. The transfer of road freight to rail would of course be advantageous in attempting to tackle these priority themes, particularly climate change. However, although often heralded as the panacea for freight distribution, rail freight does have a number of barriers to cross before achieving any mode shift (i.e. high financial costs; the extent of physical infrastructure required; and the inflexibility of the service offered). These barriers have continually made any mode shift from road to rail difficult to promote or implement. This is particularly so in a predominantly rural county such as Wiltshire where the heavy based / long distance industry that is favoured by rail freight is limited. Given this situation, the balance of LTP2 freight policies were redressed to reduce the number of rail based policies which currently outweigh those of the dominant mode of road distribution. This change does not, however, detract from still attempting to promote mode shift to rail where achievable and to recognise its importance in achieving the priority themes in the longer term.

Context

1.4 Various national and regional policy documents have been introduced since the publication of Wiltshire's last LTP. The government White Paper: 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System' (DaSTS) which set out the national transport goals was accompanied by a daughter document entitled: 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport System: The Logistics Perspective'. This document focused on the issues concerning the movement of freight within Great Britain, including the nature and composition of freight flows on the major corridors, and discussed how government and industry could work together to ensure that freight benefits from and contributes towards the national transport goals.

1.5 Alongside these overarching policies a number of mode specific policies also emerged:

- The 'Rail Freight Route Utilisation Strategy' (RUS), published in March 2007, provided a detailed analysis of freight issues, requirements and proposals for accommodating growth and changes in current demand on the rail network

- The Rail White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway', published in July 2007, looked at the potential future challenges for the railway over a 30-year horizon. It identified three long-term agendas for government and the rail industry working in partnership: increasing the capacity of the railway, delivering a quality service for passengers, and

fulfilling rail's environmental potential. The paper also committed an additional £200 million to enable work to start on a strategic freight network to provide a choice for shippers and help to address the tensions between passenger and freight train operations

- The Strategic Freight Network (SFN) was published by the DfT in September 2009. The SFN both complements and integrates with the existing rail network. It provided plans for an enhanced core trunk network capable of accommodating more and longer freight trains, with a selective ability to handle wagons with higher axle loads and greater loading gauge. The SFN looks to enhance the gauge on a diversionary route via Salisbury to provide an alternative route in the event of engineering works or severe disruption on the Southampton to Basingstoke West Coast mainline corridor.

1.6   In light of the revoking of regional spatial strategies, the 'Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016' currently provides the strategic policy framework to guide development across the administrative areas of Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council. To this end, a number of existing structure plan policies with regards to freight remain relevant:

Wiltshire Structure Plan Policy T7:

Overnight lorry parks for heavy goods vehicles should be provided in the vicinity of the strategic highway network, either where demand can be demonstrated or to alleviate nuisance caused in local settlements.

Wiltshire Structure Plan Policy T8:

The provision of intermodal and other rail freight terminals in suitable areas should be supported and land required for realistic proposals should be protected from inappropriate development.

Wiltshire structure plan policy T9:

Where carriage of freight by rail is not appropriate, encouragement will be given for heavy goods vehicle traffic to use those roads where a minimum of environmental damage will occur, principally the National Primary Route Network or Advisory Lorry Routes, accessed via the most suitable link for such traffic. Where problems caused by heavy goods vehicles making unnecessary and undesirable use of routes other than National Primary Routes or secondary routes are identified, Area wide traffic management measures will be considered.

1.7   The implications of freight traffic are a significant influence in setting spatial planning policy, and a regular consideration in development control. In policy terms, core strategies guide new development towards the most appropriate locations, and provide the framework within which individual planning decisions are reached. Alignment with the freight strategy is an important consideration. The development control process is a vital tool that helps ensure development is properly located. The ability of the local road network to accommodate development that generates and/or attracts freight traffic is a compelling factor in determining the suitability of any proposals.

1.8   The planning and policy of the transportation of minerals and waste within the county has clear links with the policies found in this strategy. However the policies are not detailed herewith and are guided by the minerals and the waste core strategies produced jointly by Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council. Policies that highlight these links are:

Policy MDC8: Sustainable Transport and Minerals Development
Wiltshire & Swindon Minerals Core Strategy 2006 – 2026

Policy MCS9: Strategic Approach to Managing Minerals Transportation
Wiltshire & Swindon Waste Core Strategy 2006 – 2026

Policy WDC11: Sustainable Transport of Waste
Wiltshire & Swindon Waste Development Control Policies 2009

1.9   Wiltshire's freight strategy was reviewed in 2000 by consultants Parkman and the outcomes were subsequently included in LTP1 as well as resulting in the creation of the Wiltshire Freight Quality Partnership (FQP). A freight action plan was then included as part of LTP2 and has been annually reviewed through the FQP. This period has also seen the combination of Swindon Borough Council to form a joint FQP which has provided a forum to discuss cross boundary issues and associated freight matters.

Freight and the national transport goals

1.10   The current priorities for both the coalition government and Wiltshire Council have been identified as 'supporting economic growth and reducing carbon emissions'. It is to be noted that both these priorities can be seen to form opposing tensions with regards to freight. Where the drive for economic growth can be seen to be at odds with the attempt to reduce carbon emissions. The difficult balance that the council has to achieve is to recognise these priorities whilst still attempting to deliver where possible the sustainable distribution of freight. Table 1.1 demonstrates some of the potential contributions that the freight strategy could deliver against these goals / priorities.

Table 1.1 Contributions towards national goals

National goals	Agreed Wiltshire priorities	Potential contributions from the freight strategy
To support economic competitiveness and growth	Most important	The highway and rail networks are essential for the movement of goods and catering for regeneration and new development.
To reduce transports emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases	Most important	Promotion of efficient deliveries and mode shift from road to rail freight. Vehicle enhancements, alternative fuels and 'eco driving'.
To contribute to better safety, security and health	Important	Safe, good quality parking is essential to drivers well being.
To promote equality of opportunity	Least important	Delivery of goods and services to disadvantaged people can enhance social inclusion.

National goals	Agreed Wiltshire priorities	Potential contributions from the freight strategy
To improve quality of life and promote a healthy natural environment	Important	The allocation of freight routes to minimise social impacts are fundamental to the quality of life of Wiltshire residents.

Freight Quality Partnership

1.11   Formed in November 2000, the FQP provides a forum for representatives from industry, freight operators, the Police, local government and other interested parties to discuss freight related matters and to promote solutions which reconcile the need for access with local environmental and social concerns. Through regular meetings, the FQP has progressed Wiltshire's LTP freight strategy and freight action plan as well as overseeing various freight studies that have been undertaken. From February 2009, Swindon Borough Council joined the FQP to form the Wiltshire and Swindon Freight Quality Partnership. This joint FQP provides a forum to discuss cross boundary issues and freight matters, whilst still maintaining a holistic Wiltshire based viewpoint.

1.12   Wiltshire Council is also an active member of the South West Freight Forum which informs and discusses freight issues at a regional level between local authorities and the freight industry. For neighbouring authorities that are not part of the freight forum it is proposed that regular meetings with regards to freight transport specifically should be initiated with these authorities and Wiltshire Council.

Strategic options appraisal

1.13   As part of the strategic options generation and appraisal process (see chapter 5 of the main LTP3 Strategy document), the following freight themes have been identified:

- Freight consolidation / break bulk
- Routing
- Management
- Information
- Parking
- Rail

1.14   Each of the above themes had three defined approaches (conventional, balanced and radical) which gave 18 separate options to appraise. The two-part initial process appraised each option against the five national transport goals and then an implementation assessment was undertaken which sought to establish how confident the council could be in implementing each option. The final outputs of the strategic options appraisal, together with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) outputs, have been used in the development of the council's proposed strategic transport options for freight.

1.15   With the anticipated limited resources for transport improvements in the coming years, the council is proposing that its LTP3 Freight Strategy will focus on freight management and information rather than, for example, the implementation of freight consolidation facilities and/or rail freight interchanges. These types of schemes are heavily infrastructure based and therefore relatively expensive to implement. Having said this, the council will seek to work with partners and others where such realistic opportunities present themselves.

1.16   Table 1.2 summarises the council's preferred strategic transport options with regards to freight.

Table 1.2 Preferred strategic transport options

Theme	Proposed approach	Broad description
Freight consolidation	Conventional	Work with freight operators and businesses on a voluntary and ad-hoc basis to achieve shared deliveries where possible.
Freight routing	Balanced	Develop and adopt an advisory freight network based on national, regional and county routes (or equivalent) with local routes to town centres and business/industrial estates.
Freight management	Balanced	Manage local freight issues through the freight assessment and priority mechanism.
Freight information	Radical	Utilise a package of traditional (e.g. paper mapping) and electronic (e.g. interactive mapping) measures to disseminate Wiltshire specific freight information to hauliers, businesses, stakeholders and the public.
Freight parking	Conventional	Maintain a minimum standard of lorry parking facilities on a requirement basis.
Rail freight	Conventional	Support the development of a freight interchange facility at Westbury railway station including all necessary associated highway infrastructures.

Key challenges

1.17   The main difficulties associated with freight distribution in Wiltshire are:

- Traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours, which can have adverse implications for the movement of goods and freight by road
- Wiltshire generates relatively little freight compared to that which passes through the county
- Given its rural nature, there is a tension between meeting the needs of industry and commerce to transport freight, and the resulting environmental and social effects
- Reliance on road based freight movements has implications for inappropriate route choice. This can result in adverse impacts on rural roads such as verge erosion and can cause intimidation within residential areas
- There is a need to try and encourage the switch of freight from road to rail. However, nearly all rail freight movements will need a road based movement at either end of the journey, and will impact on the highway network to varying degrees
- The potential for lorry drivers to take their breaks at adequate stops needs to be recognised
- The need to protect sites that currently have the potential for rail interchange use.

Objectives of the freight strategy

1.18   To meet the above challenges, a number of objectives will need to be raised within this freight strategy. These objectives form a link to the national transport goals and strategic objectives detailed in the LTP3 Strategy document. Table 1.3 details how these separate objectives link.

Table 1.3 Linked Objectives of the Strategy

Freight objective	National goal (See Table 1.1)	LTP strategic objective
Reduce HGV movements on inappropriate routes	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4, SO7, SO10, SO11, SO18.
Minimise the impact of HGV movements on local communities and the environment	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4, SO7, SO10, SO11, SO17, SO18.
Enhance road safety	3	SO8.
Provide good quality information with regards to freight, to all relevant stakeholders	1, 2, 3, 5	SO10, SO18.
Provide suitable and well placed short term and overnight lorry parking facilities,	1, 2, 3, 5	SO1, SO3, SO4, SO6, SO7, SO10.
Encourage the use of alternative forms of transporting freight, in particular by rail	1, 2, 5	SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4, SO7, SO10, SO11, SO16, SO17, SO18.
Identify and safeguard sites for possible rail freight interchange facilities	1	SO2, SO10, SO16.
Maintain the Wiltshire and Swindon FQP	1	SO1, SO10.

2 Road freight

Challenges and opportunities: road freight

2.1   Road freight distribution by the use of heavy goods vehicles (HGV), smaller lorries and vans is by far the most widely used form of distributing freight in the county. Around 85% of freight in Wiltshire is distributed via this means, which is in line with national distribution patterns. It is therefore clear that as the dominant mode appropriate policies must still be made for distribution of freight by road. It is also a demand that is increasing. National figures suggest that although HGV traffic has grown more slowly than car traffic, the government's 'National Road Traffic Forecast' indicates continuing growth at over 2% per annum. Vans and light goods vehicles have increased particularly quickly over recent years, probably in part due to the increase in home deliveries and this trend is anticipated to continue. It is clear that road freight will continue to be the dominant mode of freight distribution within Wiltshire for the foreseeable future with only a significant event such as peak oil or road pricing possibly changing this behaviour.

2.2   Due to the rural nature of the county, freight movements have a noticeable impact upon the highway network, as the roads which are used to access businesses and homes are, in some instances, neither designed nor always suitable for freight movements. Freight requires access to all points of the highway network, since households, shops, offices and factories all require goods to be delivered to them. In rural areas, farms and small businesses also generate substantial lorry movements, usually along lanes and smaller roads. With the increase in home deliveries and 'just in time' logistics these movements have become more frequent and in line with general traffic growth are expected to increase. This continued growth in demand for the movement of goods threatens to increase the impact of distribution on society, as well as placing an extra burden on its own efficiency.

2.3   The need to provide an efficient distribution system can have an adverse impact on the environment. This has resulted in issues with increased vehicle emissions from road based freight traffic, increased noise, pollution and deteriorating air quality. It also results in freight vehicles using inappropriate roads in sensitive rural areas or along residential roads. However, it should be noted that vehicle / engine efficiency has undoubtedly improved over recent years.

2.4   A number of key roads and junctions across the county suffer from peak-hour congestion. Whilst improving capacity along these roads and at these bottlenecks would be desirable, there has increasingly been a move away from continually increasing the road capacity, towards managing and maximising the existing network and managing transport demand upon it.

2.5   It is clear that the council needs to attempt to balance, where possible, the efficient distribution of goods and services whilst limiting the effect that this level of distribution has on the society it serves. There is a need to maintain economic vibrancy and growth with the realisation that we have to transport our goods and services in the most sustainable way. This need to

maintain growth and economy of course comes at a time when the coalition government is reducing department spending and anticipating further cutbacks. The council will attempt to deliver this balanced approach by continuing its current approach to freight management, developing comprehensive routing hierarchies, addressing the issues of lorry parking and providing clear and accessible information with regards to freight in Wiltshire.

Advisory routes

2.6   Since the first LTP, Wiltshire Council has promoted advisory freight routes where preferred routings for road freight have been encouraged. Drivers wishing to pass through the county without stopping are encouraged to use the M4, A303, A350 or A34. These routes (excluding the A34) coincide with the highest levels of freight traffic currently found on the county's network and are in accordance with the Wiltshire Structure Plan Policy T10. As part of the freight strategy, it is proposed that these advisory routes be reviewed to ensure their validity and to promote commonality with neighbouring authorities. This commonality will also aid the creation of a regional freight map is required. This mapping of the preferred routes will be further advanced by an online version that will provide interactive routing and location information and also include Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) restrictions and facilities for drivers. The internet version will also have the advantage of being available to a wider audience and be accessible to the majority of most modern internet enabled mobile devices.

Current advisory freight routes
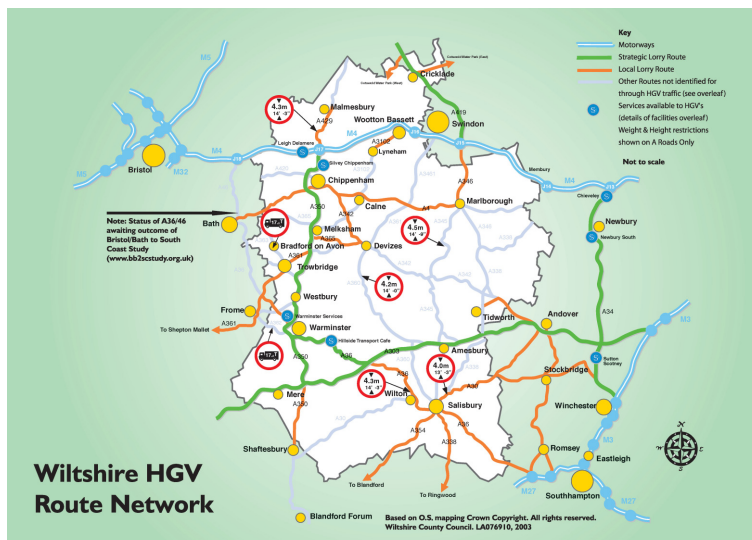
2.7   As part of the review of the advisory freight routes, it is proposed that the current two tiered system will have an additional third tier under the current local level. This third tier is proposed to bridge the current gap in the network from where the local level of routing ends and the destination or origin of any particular trip. The third tier enables both the freight industry and the public to have a clear understanding of the preferred routing for road freight traffic. This tier could enable direct and efficient routing on the most appropriate routes where currently no information is provided. It is on this level of the network that the majority of issues around road freight are commonly found and with the increase in home deliveries and smaller business needs for example, the use of these routes has increased. It is with this in mind, that through local consultation in the choice of these third tiered routes, detailed information can be provided on the preferred and most suitable routing for road freight. It is also considered that by establishing this network of routing, the information will provide benefits for freight management, signage and designating routes that are not appropriate for freight. The proposed third tier will establish the following hierarchy of freight routes:

- **Strategic** - roads for long-distance journeys

- **Local** - roads for local journeys (routes open to lorry traffic but long-distance movements not encouraged)

- **Access** - roads for access only (through traffic not advised or encouraged)

Strategic freight routes

2.8   These routes propose to encourage the majority of transit and long distance traffic to use motorways, trunk and, where appropriate, the Primary Route Network (PRN) for access to the 'Local' and in some instances 'Access' freight routes. The 'Strategic' routes are primarily established for through movements and to be the principle link to the lower levels of the hierarchy. These routes are typically established high use/flow roads on the existing network; and link with strategic or similarly named routes within neighbouring authorities' networks. The routes that constitute the strategic freight network within Wiltshire are the:

- M4
- A303
- A350
- A36
- A419

2.9   With the addition of the A34 route that is to the east of Wiltshire's boundary, a strategic route that links both the M4 and the A303 is established. This, with the A350 to the west, develops a 'strategic box' of routes that enables through movements of traffic within and through Wiltshire.

Local freight routes

2.10   The proposed 'Local' freight routes primarily direct vehicles between urban centres and significant traffic generators; wherever possible, these routes avoid unnecessary deviation onto less appropriate routes such as residential or sensitive areas. These routes are not generally suggested as through routes, unless the continuation of the journey on the designated route provides a clear socio-economic and environmental benefit. These routes are predominantly placed upon 'A' roads within the county; however, some 'B' roads are included where it is proven that no adequate alternative route is available to service a required destination or that a clear benefit for the continuation of the journey on that route can be demonstrated. The routes that constitute the local freight network are as follows (Note: the route may not constitute the entire length of the named road):

2.11
- A338
- A36
- A350
- A365
- A342
- A3026
- A4
- A346

- A429
- B4040
- A3102
- A354
- A30
- A343
- B4696
- A361

Access freight routes

2.12   The proposed 'Access' freight routes are the final and usually the most contentious areas of HGV routing. This level of routing delivers essential freight from the local or strategic freight routes to the destination / origin of the required delivery. These routes attempt to have the minimum impact on residents, other road users and the environment whilst maintaining the essential nature of deliveries, economic necessity and vibrancy of the area. These routes are for access only and are not for through HGV traffic.

2.13   Therefore, it is proposed that journeys through the county should use the designated strategic routes. Journeys that have a delivery or a starting point within the county should attempt to make the minimum use of the access routes to enable deliveries or to reach the local and strategic lorry routes for the continuation of the journey.

2.14   It is recognised that the freight routing network is advisory and that freight vehicles will still use other roads not defined as freight routes for business and access purposes.

2.15   Prior to adopting the recommended advisory freight routing network, a more detailed assessment of the routes within the county will need to be undertaken through the freight action plan. The detailed routing will consider, for example, routes into and out of major freight generators such as town centres and industrial areas. These detailed assessments will need to be consulted upon and agreed with all stakeholders. In addition, the council will liaise with neighbouring highway authorities (Swindon, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Hampshire, Bath and North East Somerset and West Berkshire) in order to ensure that the recommended freight routing network is compatible with their defined freight routes.

2.16   As indicated in the LTP strategy document, the council anticipates that there will be limited resources to implement transport improvements and as such has established a priority of potential investments. Freight routing has been allocated as a medium level of priority within this process however; it is anticipated that the initial establishment of this third tier of routing will require minimum capital expenditure.

2.17   The completion of the detailed 'Access' level of routing will be required for the implementation of the freight routing web application that forms part of the policy for freight information. As such, this detailed routing will be part of the agreed action plan for the freight strategy.

Freight Assessment and Priority Mechanism

2.18   In terms of dealing with local HGV issues, the council has in place a procedure that requires an issue to be submitted in the first instance to the relevant local town / parish council or area board for local support. These issues will then be passed on to the council for consideration using a set protocol and if required, the Freight Assessment and Priority Mechanism (FAPM).

2.19   The protocol allows the issue to be assessed and in the first instance is generally applied to measures that can be immediately applied such as providing information or small scale localised signing. Where further assessment or a wider policy context is required the FAPM will be applied. Figure 2.1 demonstrates how this protocol is applied and the levels of intervention that are typically considered.

Figure 2.1 Typical levels of freight intervention
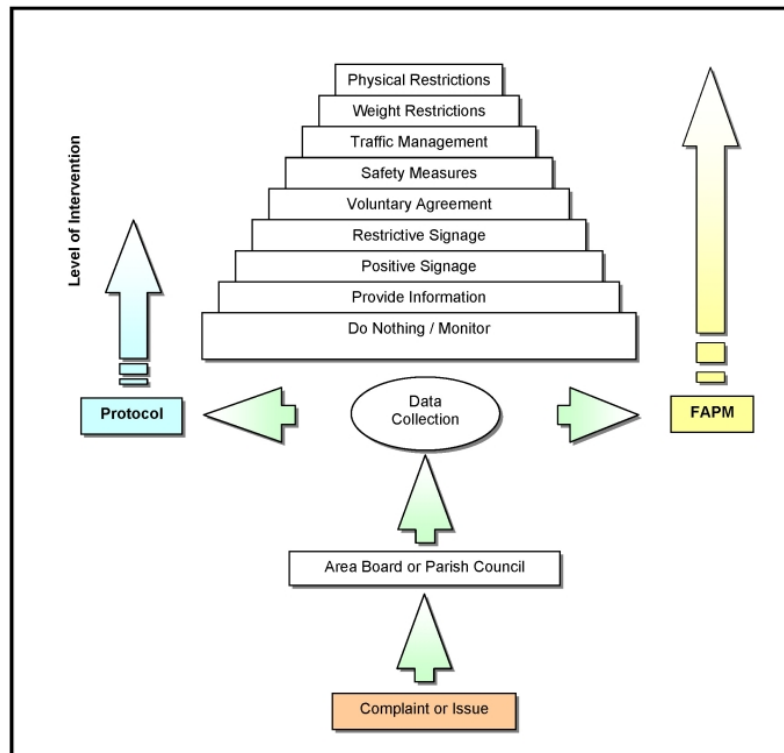
2.20 The FAPM is made up of two parts. In the first part, the local freight issues are scored against characteristics including HGV flow, safety and road characteristics. This produces a priority list highlighting the locations/routes where HGV impacts are likely to be most significant. In the second part, the highest scoring freight issues are then considered in the context of any wider policy, operational and/or deliverability issues.

2.21 Freight management requests received by the council that are assessed by the FAPM are annually re-assessed and surveys are undertaken periodically to keep existing information up-to-date. The use of the mechanism allows the council to assess the numerous requests for freight mitigation it receives and informs the council where it should focus its limited resources.

2.22 It is often found that requests for HGV mitigation from the public are based upon the belief that weight restrictions are the best mechanism in dealing with any issue regardless of type. Mitigation based around speeding vehicles is quite different than that of the mitigation against damage to properties for example. Issues raised with regards to freight are often emotive and have a narrow perspective and because of this the council uses the protocol to investigate the issue to ascertain the type and course of action required. Mitigation typically may include signing, traffic calming, noise abatement or infrastructure. Where it is considered appropriate, certain roads may be subject to the imposition of weight restrictions, if lorry movements on these routes are deemed as unacceptable.

2.23 The FAPM has proven to be a valuable tool in providing a transparent process of equitably assessing issues from the public and other stakeholders. The mechanism has also significantly reduced officer resource and reduced the need to commission numerous costly freight studies. The FAPM will continue to be used within the LTP3 period with an action to review the system to ensure its relevance subsequent to any wider issues. These wider issues could well include the proposed addition of the third tier of advisory routes as detailed

earlier. Given this possible inclusion, it is proposed that the FAPM is reviewed as part of the freight action plan, to investigate the potential that the 'Access' level of routing could have on the process.

Lorry parking

2.24   Working time regulations require drivers to stop at defined time intervals during their working day. Traffic and other delays can make it difficult to reach planned stopping points and searching for parking facilities can cause congestion and frustration to drivers and the public alike. Drivers also require safe and secure locations for overnight parking within the county. Work is currently underway to formally designate the locations of suitable stopping places for HGVs in Wiltshire and will be included as part of the action plan for this LTP. It is important that adequate lorry parking facilities are available to serve strategic routes and freight attractors within the Wiltshire area to assist in achieving the efficient, safe and secure movement of freight. It is also important that lorry parking facilities are provided in a manner which minimises adverse environmental and community impacts.

2.25   A study of lay-bys and other areas used for parking within the county has been undertaken, to establish where HGVs park for both long and short breaks and where non prescribed parking occurs. The study assessed 114 possible lorry parking areas (LPAs) within Wiltshire including lay-bys for short term rest periods. Applying a set of criteria that considered, amongst others, safety, location and facilities, the parking areas were assessed and a final 50 LPAs have been suggested as becoming designated LPAs. Included in the 50 are two car parks that are controlled by Wiltshire Council that have been nominated for HGV use. These are: Station Road - Devizes and George Lane - Marlborough. Both these car parks currently offer limited HGV parking between 6pm and 8am. The coverage and the capacity of these facilities within Wiltshire have generally been found to be sufficient.

2.26   The study also reviewed the reported levels of non-prescribed or unsuitable parking. Consultation with various parties including the police and the council's traffic management team revealed isolated pockets of illegal parking that are currently under investigation. However, evidence from this consultation has suggested that non-prescribed parking within the county is not considered to be a significant issue.

2.27   The study recommended that a new standard is devised for the level and type of lorry parking areas within Wiltshire. These standards are to be based upon the DfT's 'Lorry Parking Baseline Report' (2009) that had been applied within the study. The following standards were suggested:

Wiltshire 'basic'

- Meets a standard set of basic criteria
- Has advanced signage on the highway
- Has the provision of a litter bin.

Wiltshire 'intermediate'

- Meets all the criteria found in the basic standard
- Ideally has toilet and cleaning facilities and / or
- Ideally has an outlet selling hot food and refreshments
- The parking area would normally be lit but may not have many security measures.

Wiltshire 'premium'

- Meets all criteria found in the' basic' and 'intermediate' standards
- Good facilities particularly geared to companies wanting vehicles parked at approved, secure places
- Will have toilet and shower facilities
- Provision of lighting, CCTV and other security measures
- Good quality meals and driver facilities.

2.28   It is proposed that improvements to the existing LPAs should be firstly considered at locations where the study had found deficiencies in the facilities they provide. Once these LPAs have reached the desired minimum 'Basic' standard they should be maintained, regularly checked and have information on their location to benefit all road users.

2.29   Wiltshire Council will continue to support commercial lorry parks and will attempt to promote these and any new developments that are proposed within the vicinity of the strategic highway network.

2.30   As the local planning authority, the council will also ensure that any new relevant industrial / commercial development provides good quality HGV parking, services and manoeuvring space as an integral part of the proposed development.

2.31   As part of this LTP3, Wiltshire Council has undertaken a wholesale review of parking and parking charges within council owned car parks (see LTP3 Car Parking Strategy). Whilst this review has predominantly focused upon 'car' parking there are two parks that cater for overnight freight parking as previously mentioned (Devizes and Marlborough). Currently a fee of £4.20 after 6pm applies to both of these car parks and will not be adjusted as with the current car park charges at this time. It is proposed to review these charges annually based upon the consumer price index and neighbouring authorities pricing.

2.32   As part of the car parking strategy, a separate report on season tickets has recommended that the dedicated HGV parking permit is removed from the available permit types and HGVs are offered a standard season ticket in these locations at the standard season ticket cost.
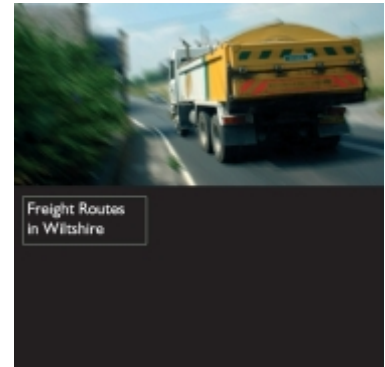
Information

2.33   A clear strategy to improve the quality and accessibility of all transport information is an important element of encouraging change, this is particularly applicable to road freight in achieving the goal of the efficient distribution of freight. Information provided by the council can provide real benefits in ensuring:

- that suitable vehicles use suitable routes
- the efficient planning of lorry routes by logistical managers
- that the general public are informed and awareness is raised with regards to freight in Wiltshire
- that drivers are aware of the locations for suitable and safe parking
- that drivers are aware of weight, height and other restrictions
- that any delivery restrictions are detailed
- that drivers unfamiliar with the area can be provided with detailed information.

2.34 Wiltshire Council believes that information and awareness is a key area in which real benefits can be found to achieve the efficient and safe movement of freight within the county. To achieve these benefits, various policy and operational instruments will be required:

- **Signage:** Advisory Lorry Route Signing (black panelled signs with white text) can be used where deemed applicable and when justification of the inappropriateness of the existing route can be demonstrated
- **Mapping:** All the advisory routing for lorries will be made freely available. Physical paper maps should be made available and can be printed direct from the council's website
- **Information boards:** Freight specific information boards positioned at major parking sites within the county. These boards could carry information on advisory freight routes and access to facilities for example
- **Advertising and awareness:** Raising awareness of sustainable distribution and the role that it plays will be very important in highlighting both what the industry requires and the public expect. Any proposal for change needs to be advertised in a manner that obtains the widest audience and makes all stakeholders aware of what is trying to be achieved
- **Freight specific website:** Wiltshire Council proposes to use a dedicated web portal that provides information specifically aimed at road freight. The web portal will provide up to date information including mapping and routing information to all stakeholders.

Technology

2.35 Information and technology have an increasing influence on aiding the efficient movement of freight. From online journey planners and information to dedicated logistics monitoring and reporting through to the now common satellite navigation GPS systems. GPS systems have become relatively affordable and are perceived as a valuable aid to the driver. However, it has become increasingly more common for lorries to be routed along unsuitable roads where drivers have implicitly trusted the information they have received from their device. It also has to be noted that the vast majority of satellite navigation devices currently used show only 'car specific' information. Wiltshire Council is working with partners in the region to highlight these issues and to seek support at a national level and from the satellite navigation and mapping companies. Whilst this is recognised as a long term aspiration, interim solutions are also being investigated.
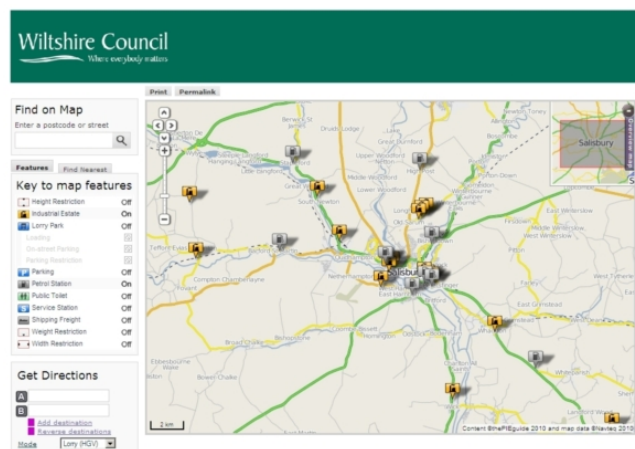
2.36 Whilst satellite navigation systems for the car user have become common place and relatively affordable, systems dedicated to freight have only recently been developed and are significantly more expensive which has promoted the use of unsuitable systems being used by lorry drivers. Another issue that should be noted with these devices is the frequency at

which the data is updated and hence the accuracy of the data displayed. The updating is predominantly achieved by user interaction with the device and because of this, it is difficult to establish if all users have the correct information available.

2.37   As the council has limited influence in what is essentially a commercial and national issue, the council's approach is as indicated earlier; namely, a dedicated web portal for freight issues. This web portal, whilst not directly addressing the issue of routing through satellite navigation systems, does afford the users a routing solution prior to the start of any journey and due to its platform being based upon current web based standards can also be used on the majority of most modern Internet enabled mobile devices. The web portal will allow users to plan their journey into and out of the county whilst avoiding all weight and height restrictions and using the agreed advisory networks. The web portal can also display specific datasets such as:

- Width restrictions
- Parking restrictions
- Petrol stations
- Toilets
- Lorry parks
- Lay-bys
- Loading/unloading restrictions
- Industrial estates
- Roads unsuitable for freight
- Single/double yellow lines.

2.38   It is envisaged that the future potential of this software solution that it will be possible for this information to be transferred onto standard satellite navigation systems and mobile devices. The internet version will also have the advantage of being available to a wider audience and be accessible to the public therefore providing specific information with regards to advised freight routing within their area.

Freight consolidation centres (break bulk)

2.39   Freight consolidation centres (FCC) are depots or centres at which freight is unloaded, combined and distributed into smaller units prior to delivery on smaller more efficient vehicles. This breaking down of larger consignments is sometimes also referred to as break bulk. FCCs have consistently been debated as effective mechanisms for removing freight from local roads. In operation, FCCs have proven to provide environmental benefits and have reduced lorry movements significantly. However, FCCs require significant investment, subsidy and not least the critical mass of retailers to use it. There are currently no FCC's in Wiltshire, but the council continues to monitor developments in Bristol and the Southgate shopping centre in Bath where FCCs are currently in operation. As part of the strategic options appraisal process, the more radical options such as pursuing this type of facility was found to be unachievable, not least because of the financial implications and the required mass of retailers needed to make such a venture viable. To this end, Wiltshire Council will endeavour to liaise with businesses and freight operators through the FQP to investigate if the possibility of ad hoc freight consolidation and shared deliveries are feasible.

3 Rail freight

Challenges and opportunities:rail freight

3.1 Wiltshire is basically a through-train county for rail freight. A council study in 2008 found that 86% of freight trains in Wiltshire travel through the county and there are no rail freight movements with both end trips in Wiltshire. Freight movements in the county consist predominantly of the Somerset quarry traffic routed via Westbury to London or Wootton Bassett. There is also movement of oil tanks through the county from Hampshire and freight movements from Avonmouth/Portishead and South Wales on the Great Western mainline, as well as freight from Didcot in the other direction towards Cardiff. New traffic has been concentrated on Swindon, serving the motor industry. There is also considerable movement of rail infrastructure materials to and from the Network Rail sidings at Westbury. Westbury is also the main centre of employment for train crew of services of rail freight in the area.

3.2 Rail freight has grown rapidly in the past ten years and further growth (30% in freight tonnes lifted nationally) is forecast to 2014/15. Depending on variables such as payload and train length, this could be equivalent of 240 additional freight trains nationally per day on week days (Network Rail, 2007).

3.3 The now revoked RSS noted that rail freight flows in the south west region are limited in number and are primarily concentrated on a small number of particular markets such as china clay, stone, coal and cars. Subsequently it recognised that freight volumes to and from the South West limit the viability of rail freight.

3.4 Rail freight can provide distinct benefits to business, society and local authorities over road based transport. Road based congestion and associated road maintenance could be reduced if significant transfer to rail could be achieved. However, rail's biggest advantage is the environmental benefits that can be achieved. Using rail freight produces 3.4 times less CO_2 per tonne-km than road transport, which means that switching to rail freight could give a 70% reduction in CO_2 emissions compared to the equivalent road journey (DaSTS, 2008).

3.5 To enable the transfer of road freight to rail, a number of disadvantages inherent to rail freight will need to be overcome, not least the fact that rail cannot offer the door-to-door delivery that road freight affords, therefore always incurring a 'double handling' cost. There are only a limited number of road/rail transfer points that can be used and these have to be accessible at both ends of the journey. The general cost of moving freight by rail, in most instances, is greater than that for road based freight movement and the inflexibility of rail freight scheduling

balanced against modern consumer demands also have to be considered. As a result, and especially within the current financial climate, these disadvantages ultimately influence businesses on how to efficiently and cost effectively move their goods.

3.6   Ideal traffic for rail freight is generally that involving high volume and/or long-distance flows. Various surveys conducted since the first LTP period have sought to determine the potential transfer to rail freight from both business and the rail freight industry itself. These surveys have unfortunately had a disappointing response rate and as such has presented difficulties in the council actively promoting the transfer to rail. The level of response could also be viewed as indicative of the current interest and type/size of applicable business that could realistically transfer to rail freight.

3.7   The first LTP identified local businesses and operations that could potentially transfer from road to rail freight operations. It is to be noted that the majority of those identified have either significantly reduced their operations, relocated or have closed down. It should also be recognised that these businesses have not been replaced by large scale industry that affords the opportunity of mode transfer. Further surveys to gauge the views of local industry have been held in abeyance due to the current financial climate.

3.8   Westbury intermodal freight terminal - The previous LTP2 policy states that a site at Westbury is protected / safeguarded for rail use: "Planning permission will not be permitted on the safeguarded land if it would be likely to prejudice the future enhancement of rail freight services from the site" (West Wiltshire District Plan). This statement is still applicable although Network Rail is currently using the site for line reclamation and have recently completed an £8 million investment in the site. To date there has been very limited interest from industry or business in implementing any interchange at the site and the range of facilities on the trading estate is currently considered insufficient to support any such interchange.

3.9   At the time of writing, the future of the former Lafarge site near Westbury is unknown. It is to be noted that this site offers good opportunity due to its on-site rail sidings and has potential use, particularly in waste management / transport that could be investigated / promoted. Equally the former quarry at Quidhampton has potential for freight transfer and talks continue with the landowners with regards to the future of these sites.

3.10   The difficulties found in progressing the transfer of road to rail is not uncommon in similar rural authorities and the council's influence in progressing such change relies upon the interest and the existence of potential business and industries close to and within Wiltshire, that would be willing to investigate the potential of transfer from road to rail deliveries. Wiltshire Council will continue to pursue the possibility of transfer to rail freight through the Wiltshire and Swindon Freight Quality Partnership and through dialogue with potential business, industries and regional bodies.

Waterborne freight

3.11   Wiltshire's only suitable waterway for any type of freight movement is the Kennet & Avon Canal, which runs from the outskirts of Bristol to Reading. After a prolonged closure, the canal has been restored by the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust and is now only used for pleasure craft. Given the current use of the canal, the opportunity for any substantial use for commercial traffic would be minimal.

3.12   In March 2010, the DfT gave consent for the construction of Bristol's Deep Sea Container Terminal (BDSCT) at Avonmouth Docks in Bristol. The terminal is one of the country's fastest growing ports and will further develop as Bristol Port plans to expand its facilities with a new deep sea container terminal. The terminal is designed to service not only today's largest container vessels, but also future generations of ultra large container ships when they enter

service. As part of this process, a full Traffic Impact Assessment was required to be undertaken. The overall conclusion of this assessment is that at worst, the local (Avonmouth) area would be subject to minor increases in traffic associated with the operation of the BDSCT. Wiltshire Council will continue to monitor traffic associated with this development within the county, however it is anticipated that the operation of this facility and any transfer of shipments from Southampton will not adversely affect traffic volume within Wiltshire.

Current policies

3.13   The previous LTP2 Freight Strategy policies were somewhat unbalanced by those of rail freight. The LTP2 proposed ten separate freight policies, where six of these polices relate in some manner to rail freight. The council is aware that although the LTP3 document represents a long-term period and that change is not unrealistic over this period, the policies around rail freight, albeit worthy, have to display a level of pragmatism and develop around a realistic and sound basis of aspiration versus achievable opportunities. Some of the difficulties that surround the rail based policies have been discussed in the previous chapter and have a particular relevance in a rural context such as Wiltshire. The policies that link to rail have had limited, if any success since their original addition in the first LTP. The factors limiting the progress of these policies such as the financial and commercial will of local business to invest in rail freight are anticipated to remain until stronger central government incentives are in place or a major shift in behaviour is forced through global events.

3.14   To this end, the balance of the freight strategy policies have been readdressed to provide a realistic policy framework under which the dominant mode of freight transportation is recognised whilst combining some of the previous more aspiration based rail policies into a more achievable overall strategy.

4 Freight policies

FP1: Freight Quality Partnership

Wiltshire Council, in partnership with Swindon Borough Council, will continue to work with the freight industry and freight related stakeholders through the regular meetings of the Wiltshire and Swindon Freight Quality Partnership.

FP2: Freight routes

To develop and implement, through the freight action plan, a comprehensive advisory freight network that will achieve three levels of freight routes within the county. To facilitate the efficient movement of freight traffic with the minimum social, environmental and economic costs.

FP3: Freight consolidation

To investigate the possibilities of shared deliveries and ad-hoc freight consolidation.

FP4: Freight Assessment and Priority Mechanism

Wiltshire Council will continue to assess freight issues using the FAPM and will review and update the mechanism where required.

FP5: Lorry parking

Develop a new standard for lorry parking facilities and to ensure that all recognised lorry parking areas obtain a minimum 'Basic' standard with this standard being maintained to benefit all road users.

FP6: Lorry parking at new developments

Ensure that any new industrial / commercial development which falls under the relevant criteria, initiates a transport statement / assessment to consider good quality HGV parking, services and manoeuvring space as an integral part of the proposed development.

FP7: Information

Educate and raise awareness on sustainable freight distribution using available instruments including a dedicated web presence for freight within the county.

FP8: Safeguard land for future rail use

Use relevant planning policies to continue to protect land within Wiltshire where applicable for future rail use and safeguard from inappropriate development.

FP9: Transfer road to rail freight

Wiltshire Council will continue to support and promote where applicable the transfer of road based freight movements onto the rail network.

How we will aim to achieve these policies

4.1   Policy FP1 will be achieved by:

1. Continuation of regular scheduled meetings
2. Continued presence of freight industry representatives and local freight operators
3. Promotion of the FQP to new members and stakeholders
4. Continue to explore the possibility of developing 'consolidation centres' for the transfer of goods from HGVs to smaller vehicles for final distribution
5. Information and feedback via the councils web site.

4.2   Policy FP2 will be developed by:

1. A full review of the current freight routes
2. Develop criterion for 'Access' definition
3. FQP consultation on proposed additions / amendments
4. Public consultation on proposed routing
5. Delivering a mechanism to highlight these changes.

4.3   Policy FP3 will use the following actions to support this policy:

1. Liaise with freight operators and business
2. Determine the feasibility of any such scheme
3. Develop a supporting mechanism through the FQP
4. Support any voluntary trial of shared scheme.

4.4   Policy FP4 will use the following actions to support this policy:

1. Continued use of the FAPM to assess freight issues
2. Development and further refining of the mechanism via the FQP.

4.5   Policy FP5 will use the following actions to support this policy:

1. Seek to identify overnight parking facilities for HGVs where a known demand exists
2. Apply an agreed 'basic' standard to lorry parking in Wiltshire
3. Liaise with the council's traffic management team to establish funding and timetable of action
4. Improve existing LPAs to agreed standard and maintain these sites
5. Provide and promote information on the location of these LPAs to all stakeholders.

4.6   Policy FP6 will use the following actions to support this policy:

1. Liaise with the council's development control team to ensure that significant new commercial developments have appropriate parking and manoeuvring space considered during the planning process.
2. FQP to be consulted upon significant new commercial developments.

4.7   Policy FP7 will use the following actions to support this policy:

1. Commission of a dedicated freight web presence for Wiltshire
2. Online routing solution for road freight deliveries into and within Wiltshire's boundaries
3. Freely available mapping of advisory freight routes
4. Advisory signage where applicable
5. Provide information and support, to encourage the transfer of road freight to rail

6.   Freight Information boards at strategic parking sites within the county

7.   Work in partnership with the freight industry, DfT, Highways Agency, Network Rail, Police and the public to raise awareness of freight and associated issues around the transport of goods.

4.8   Policy FP8 will use the following actions to support this policy:

1.   To continue to protect land from inappropriate development where the potential for rail freight use exists

2.   To re-evaluate potential sites through the freight action plan.

4.9   Policy FP9 will use the following actions to support this policy:

1.   Work in partnership with the freight industry, DfT, Highways Agency, Network Rail and other stakeholders to promote and investigate and revitalise interest in the transfer of freight from road to rail

2.   Conduct surveys to determine the potential of road freight to rail

3.   Attempt to have regular contact with rail stakeholders through membership of the FQP.

5 Developments in the freight industry

5.1   **Lorry Road User Charge (LRUC)**: Prior to the general election, the Conservative party stated that if they come to power they would introduce a charging scheme for any foreign and British HGVs over 12 tonnes. The commitment to look into the possibilities of a lorry road user charging scheme in the UK has yet to be confirmed by the government. The concept of a LRUC is seen to "level a rather uneven playing field", which has seen UK hauliers disadvantaged by overseas drivers filling up with cheap diesel before entering the UK.

5.2   **Long vehicles:** The previous government undertook a study in 2008 on the possibilities of allowing longer heavier vehicles to use UK roads in line with other European Union member states. The resulting report confirmed that such 'super lorries' would be impractical on the UK road network. As such the Secretary of State at that time confirmed that these lorries would not be allowed on UK roads for the foreseeable future. The report did however indicate that there could be worthwhile benefits from permitting a modest increase in length of current articulated vehicles. The DfT at the time indicated that it would consider this further in light of its ongoing strategic work on freight. Wiltshire Council will monitor this situation and respond accordingly if a decision is made to pursue longer vehicles.

5.3   **Light goods vehicles:** There has been substantial growth of the van sector. In 2007 there were 3.2 million licensed Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) registered in Great Britain, which is 9% of total licensed vehicles and account for 13% of total traffic in Great Britain. This traffic has increased by 40% between 1997 and 2007 and has accounted for 31% of all new traffic in that period.

5.4   **Satellite navigation:** Freight specific satellite navigation units are slowly entering the commercial markets but are unfortunately still relatively expensive compared to car based versions. Wiltshire Council will continue to work with the South West Regional Freight Forum, the freight industry and the satellite navigation companies to assist where possible with the development and awareness of these technologies.

5.5   **Lorry Watch:** Wiltshire Council has recently conducted a pilot 'Lorry Watch' scheme in the north of the county. The 'Lorry Watch' scheme uses local observers to detect the misuse of weight restricted routes by HGVs. The scheme is co-ordinated by the Trading Standards Department of the council which obtains vehicle owners details from the DVLA and then contact the owners of the vehicles to determine whether the driver was in contravention of the weight limit. A report on the success of the pilot is due shortly and will determine if the scheme is offered to other parishes who wish to participate in such a scheme.

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