

Mitigating the effects of HGVs on Leicestershire's Roads

A report by Head of Transportation and Development to the Highways Advisory Board on 11th November 2008

Background

1. All Members of HAB have been provided with a copy of the Leicestershire County Council report on "Mitigating the effects of HGVs on Leicestershire's roads". This work will be helpful in aiding Kent County Council in shaping its Freight Strategy and revised lorry route plan.
2. Leicestershire is centrally located within the UK; it has high mineral output and a multitude of industrial estates, particularly in the North West of the County. Increasing levels of HGV movements were generated by these industries resulting in greater use of rural roads to access the motorway and trunk road network. Many of these rural roads were unsuitable for such traffic and Heavy Goods Vehicles (**HGV's**) were causing extensive damage to roads. Problems encountered include: - rural roads/verges, noise, vibration, road safety issues, pollution and dirt on the highway network.
3. The initial public pressure came from residents in the north-west of the county. North West Leicestershire is home to several of the largest coalmines in England. The majority of the outputs of these sites (pre 1990) were transported by rail network.
4. Due to rail strikes in the late 1980's, the cost of railway links to shipping ports was high resulting in the road haulage industry expanding significantly. The modal shift in transport created implications within Leicestershire mainly due to the industrial areas and coal-mines being sited well away from the main trunk roads and motorways. This meant that travel through villages and other small hamlets (**approx 700 a day**) were inevitable as drivers would take the most direct and fuel efficient route to the primary road network.
5. Public pressure for remedial action to alleviate the HGV situation grew in the late 1980's. As a result, the County Council undertook a review and came up with a proposed area wide 7.5Tonne (Except for loading and unloading) weight restriction, bounded by non weight restricted 'peripheral' routes. The initial scheme was a success resulting in Leicestershire County Council proposing an extension which also proved a success. The scheme now covers the whole of Leicestershire.

Benefits of Lorry Restrictions – Based on Leicestershire County Council's HGV Scheme

* **Improved Road Safety** – decrease in HGV related accident statistics on rural routes within Leicestershire.

* **Improved Environment** – Reduction in HGV result in Lower vehicle emissions within the rural areas.

* **Maintenance Costs** – reduced damage to minor carriageways caused by HGV's resulting in less frequent repair work.

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- * **Improved Signage** – Signage directing HGV's on certain routes can be coupled with directional signage to smaller villages.
- * **Better communication with Highway Authority** – Public relations can improve as dedicated personnel are able to act as a contact to solve Lorry related issues.
- * **Improved Image** – Successful Lorry restrictions will enhance the image of the rural nature of roads, offering more protection to both the environment and wildlife in the TRAMP area.
- * **Less damage to vehicles** – Taking HGV's off of unsuitable routes reduces maintenance costs on the carriageway.
- * **Improved/Safer environment** – Restricting roads within rural areas will improve the environment for residents within the affected villages.

Negatives of Lorry Restrictions based on Leicestershire County Council's HGV Scheme

- * **Concentration of HGV movements through villages** – residents will be pleased with lorry ban on their route/road, however, the problem is not alleviated, effectively, the HGV traffic is simply moved onto a neighbouring route resulting in a problem for somebody else.
- * **Capital Cost** – initial outlay of the cost, TRO's, Signage, and Diversion Routes. Leicestershire is smaller than Kent, to date, the cost of the Lorry ban is £2 million solely on signage.
- * **Additional Staff** – FT employment would need to be undertaken to control the Lorry restrictions. Leicestershire had at one time a team consisting of 5 F/T employees dealing with the work. There are 2 F/T employees covering the Lorry Ban today.
- * **Additional Fuel Costs** – Due to the fact that drivers can no longer take the 'shortest route' to join onto the major road network, fuel costs may increase due to excessive mileage undertaken to do this. This also poses damage to the surrounding environment as drivers will in fact be covering more miles than need be.
- * **Removal of Freedom of Routes** – Many local residents will feel restricted to join major routes as these will predominantly be served for HGV purposes.
- * **Greater Route Planning Required** – Easy task for local drivers who are familiar with local routes. Potential hazard for foreign lorry drivers, who are dependant of Satellite Navigation Systems.
- * **Prosecution** – Enforcement was initially imposed by Leicestershire CC's Trading Standards dept. reporting to Haulage companies of driver activity. This proved unsuccessful due to letters being ignored. LCC now pay local Police £60k annually to enforce the ban.

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Comments

6. The Leicestershire work is clearly an example of good practice and this will be used in the Freight Strategy work being undertaken by the County Council's Transport Strategy team. The key issue in Leicestershire was 700 HGV movements daily travelling from the NW of the County mainly in a westerly direction to join onto the M1. These HGV's were travelling to/from a busy national/international industries located in a fixed place within the county.
7. Leicestershire's costs are in the region of £2 million purely for signage; this does not include the maintenance costs. This £2 million had been contributed over 15 years and is still using public funding to date. Kent is larger in scale compared to Leicestershire so funding will be a key issue in this regard.
8. An issue evident in Leicestershire is higher vehicle emissions due to extra mileage on diversion routes. In some cases these routes are in excess of 15 miles. This needs careful thought in a Kent context.

Recommendation

9. Members note the contents of this report
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