

Satellite Navigation Devices and their impact on rural areas

A report by the Head of Network Management to the Highways Advisory Board on 8th May 2008

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on the progress by KCC in dealing with the problems associated with satellite navigation devices and other specific matters relating to HGV movements. The March meeting of this Board considered a reference from the Maidstone JTB relating to heavy goods vehicle management to the south and west of Maidstone. The JTB had requested that the Board recommend the funding of necessary surveys to establish the position with regard to HGVs in Yalding and East Farleigh. It was agreed that a report should be considered by this Board in May and is covered in paragraph 10 of this report.

Freight Quality Partnerships

2. Over the years the Freight Quality Partnerships facilitated by KCC have looked to address the use of our network by HGVs. Through these partnerships, KCC has engaged with Local Hauliers, National Freight Organisations and other stakeholders, such as business associations, District, Parish and Town Councils and Neighbouring Authorities.
3. Strategic routes across Kent for HGVs have been agreed with the Freight Quality Partnerships and for most areas maps showing these strategic routes have been generated and made available to hauliers. Additionally, these maps also included other points of interest such as restrictions, rest stops and services, so that the most appropriate selection of route can be made. Unfortunately these maps become out-of-date very quickly due to new developments, regenerations, improved highway links and therefore need regular updating and re-publishing.
4. KCC are in the process of reviewing the current maps and will be updating and publishing a new set of maps this calendar year.

Sat Nav Data

5. KCC are collating a comprehensive inventory that will provide accurate data relating to road widths, height restrictions, gradients and traffic orders. This data will be given to Ordnance Survey and the Sat Nav companies in order to introduce this data into their devices.
6. In addition, KCC are encouraging Ordnance Survey to carry out regular driven surveys to record the location of traffic orders (weight limits and one way streets) and supply this information to the sat nav companies.
7. KCC is keen to see that Sat Nav equipment and data is improved to avoid HGVs being directed down unsuitable roads occurring in future. It is recognised that this is a long term solution due to the complexity of the data that is held by KCC and the method by which data is transferred and utilised by Sat Nav companies. This data is likely to take one to two years to collate and become fully available to the Sat Nav companies.

Route Signage

8. "Unsuitable for HGVs" signs have been used in Kent for many years to deter drivers from using very minor roads. At present there are no DfT approved "sat nav" signs for use on the public highway in England. There is a concern that the provision of such signs could lead to a

proliferation of signs in the countryside, which is in direct conflict with the desire to reduce sign clutter.

Satellite Navigation Devices – an update

9. However KCC will introduce DfT approved multilingual route signing to direct British and foreign lorry traffic to and from commercial premises by the most appropriate routes. These signs will be introduced on the network as and when they have been assessed as a necessity.

HGVs in Yalding and East Farleigh

10. The Maidstone JTB raised the key issue is the funding of vehicle movement surveys to produce the necessary evidence to instigate a weight limit on Yalding Bridge in order to relieve the area of excessive heavy lorry movements in the area. It is considered that in order to ensure that the imposition of a weight limit and consequent re-direction of lorries does not have an adverse impact on other locations, a Kentwide Freight Strategy will be produced during the current financial year which will consider a number of options. An opportunity will also be taken to up-date the lorry route map which was produced some four years ago and is now out of date. The Freight Strategy, once complete, will be put on a future agenda of this Board. At this point, it is not proposed to take any further action on the imposition of a weight limit on Yalding bridge.

Proposal

11. In response to the increasing concerns relating to use of inappropriate routes by HGVs using satellite navigation systems, KCC have been collating complaints received to identify locations that are frequently affected by inappropriate use of minor roads by HGVs.
12. In response to this KCC are developing the following list of strategies to effectively manage the HGV traffic on its network:
 - Undertake a Kentwide Freight Strategy.
 - Introduce multilingual route signing to direct British and foreign lorry traffic to and from commercial premises by the most appropriate routes.
 - Update and publicise a 'Kent Lorry Route Map' for lorry drivers to direct them to principal commercial areas.
 - Promoting 'Freight Quality Partnerships' to ensure working in partnership with Freight Associations, the police and other bodies to promote good practice and develop innovative ideas
 - Continue regular liaison with the DfT, Ordnance Survey and Sat Nav companies to improve the accuracy and quality of data being provided.
 - Continue to press the DfT to provide some leadership in the development of In-Vehicle Information Systems (IVIS) legislation.

Conclusion

13. Members are asked to note this report.
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