

7 Guiding delivery - next steps: efficient transport network management

Council Plan priorities 2011-2014: making places easier to reach; a resilient economy

“Making the best use of existing roads for the benefit of all road users.”

Department for Transport, Network Management Duty Guidance 2004

“..avoiding, reducing and minimising congestion or disruption.”

Department for Transport, LTP Guidance 2009

Derbyshire’s aim for its highway network is one on which people travel safely, with reliable journey times and that they have the best available information to ensure that they can make informed choices about how they will travel within, through and beyond the County.

A wide range of traffic management measures are available for the benefit of road users e.g. junction and signing improvements, speed limits, co-ordination of street works, parking controls, providing travel information, the winter service and PRow improvement. Making the best use of our current road and rights of way network is important for both economic vitality and society in general. The Council’s highway network helps the movement of goods and services, and provides access to homes and businesses. The network also provides the routes for supplying services and facilities beyond Derbyshire.



Traffic control and signage.

Good, efficient traffic control reduces delay, which in turn reduces emissions of pollutants at urban speeds. We will aim to reduce vehicle delays on the roads, particularly in areas with existing poor air quality, and encourage freight vehicles to use designated routes. Another aim is to improve cycling and walking environments, thereby encouraging greater levels of walking for short journeys, particularly to town centres, workplaces, schools and public transport interchanges.

Air quality across the County is largely good, although the need to reduce the harmful emissions from vehicles remains important. In particular, although Chesterfield Borough Council has not declared an Air Quality Management Area, the air quality situation remains an area for concern. This points to the need to target remedial measures in this area.

The work of the various agencies who carry out works on the highway needs to be properly co-ordinated to ensure that:

- safety and protection is carried out to a very high standard,
- full safety and courtesy is given to all road users, especially vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders,
- first-time permanent, quality reinstatements are used in order to maintain the condition of the highway and minimise disruption and inconvenience to all road users.

The County Council will also work to improve travel information to ensure that it is accurate and that it provides timely information about events and incidents on the highway network and make sure that this is communicated to the travelling public by a variety of means, such as the internet and media reports. The Council was one of the partners which developed the Electronic Local Government Information Network (ELGIN) system which provides information about roadworks: http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport_roads/roads_traffic/roadworks/default.asp

A short summary of Derbyshire’s progress with the Network Management Duty Plan is included in Appendix A.

7.1 Network management priorities

Traffic Management Act 2004

The priorities for network management incorporate those provided by the Traffic Management Act (2004). These include co-ordination of street works, reducing congestion and delays for all road users, incident management and emergency responses, and travel information. This work takes place throughout Derbyshire, and will be informed by local data e.g. congestion.

Derbyshire challenges

Also identified as priorities for this area, based on the Derbyshire challenges analysis are the management of planned events, direction and tourist signing, environmental improvements, freight management, efficient winter service and on street parking, loading and waiting control. In particular, transport network management must strive to help reduce the impacts of traffic and help to manage visitor pressures in the Peak District National Park and the World Heritage Corridor.

Noise management

Noise from traffic can cause annoyance, disturb sleep or, at its worst, give rise to health risks. Where noise from traffic exceeds recommended standards we are required to plan action to reduce noise levels under the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006. The Government is taking the lead in this by mapping the locations that are most likely to be exceeding standards across the country. We will be receiving advice from Government on the extent of the sections of road within Derbyshire which we will need to consider. Over the next year, we will be investigating noise levels at these locations to identify what issues exist and, where necessary, undertake action to reduce noise.

Civil Parking Enforcement

The aims of Civil Parking Enforcement in Derbyshire are to:

- Maintain and, where possible, improve the flow of traffic, thereby making the County a more pleasant and environmentally safe place to live and visit.
- Take into account the needs of local residents, shops and businesses, thereby sustaining the local economic growth.
- Actively support the needs of disabled people bearing in mind that, in some cases, they are unable to use public transport and are entirely dependent upon the use of a car. This will ensure that people with disabilities are able to have equal access to all facilities within the County.
- Actively discourage indiscriminate parking that causes obstruction to other motorists, public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities. This will ensure that the districts/boroughs remain accessible to all, equally and safely.

The Derbyshire Parking Partnership (ParkSmarter) includes the County and its constituent District/Boroughs. The partnership is working to deal with conflicting demands for parking space and time. This includes reducing congestion, support for local businesses, residents, the enforcement of dropped kerbs to keep driveways and tactile crossing points clear, the enforcement of blue badge bays (parking concessions for people with mobility problems), support to local schools, and compliance testing to monitor the effectiveness of the enforcement.



Public requests

Much activity is created by public requests relating to traffic management matters e.g. residents' parking schemes, traffic speeds, or pedestrian crossings etc. For example, local residents of Belper have requested a speed reduction on the A6 at the northern edge of the town. Also, specific traffic management issues may arise from the expansion of commercial activities in the County. Clarity over the levels of service which can be provided for such requests will be devised through the Investment Protocol (see Funding Chapter 11).

7.2 Network management core business

Road space provision in Derbyshire is a limited resource, especially in our historic towns and rural villages, and the provision of additional space would be environmentally unacceptable to many residents and visitors. Therefore, the roads in these areas will have to be managed more effectively and in a more sustainable manner. The cumulative impact, however, of a number of smaller scale schemes can be visually damaging overall. Good design principles will aim to respect and seek to enhance the character, appearance and local distinctiveness of both urban and rural areas.

In order to manage the County network, the Council will continue to identify current and future causes of congestion and disruption, and to plan and take action accordingly.

A balance needs to be struck between different road users and different road types. Different roads need dissimilar policies, and for this reason the Council will continue to identify different road types, when there are changes to the network, throughout the County and continue to develop a clear understanding of the problems faced on different parts of the network. This allows a structured approach to the allocation of road space on different routes or different types of route. For example, 'quiet lanes' are designated as being appropriate for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and some other vehicles. Lorries, motorbikes, cars and vans are encouraged to use alternative routes. The Council is looking for initial trial areas with a view to expanding them if they are successful.

The hierarchical approach to managing the network is also covered in Chapter 6.

Dealing with disruption on the roads and rights of way

Most users of the highway network have a differing expectation from it. Reliable journeys are important to the majority of people who travel in Derbyshire and beyond. The utility companies need access to upgrade and maintain their apparatus for the benefit of their customers. For everyone, the ability to use the network safely remains a high priority.

In order that any potential conflicts can be sensitively handled, a co-ordinated and pro-active approach to managing the network will be taken by the Council. Many people use PRow, or a combination of roads and PRow, for their journeys; a prioritised list of the PRow in most need of surface improvements or which benefit the most users will be drawn up (see Chapter 6).

Improvements to the co-ordination of street works

Previous growth in the economy and the introduction of competition into Statutory Undertakers' services with a resultant increase in customer demand for their services has led to an increasing number of excavations in the highway network. There is a constant potential for conflict between the utility companies who have statutory rights to use the streets, the Highway Authorities that also use and maintain them and those who use them for transport purposes.



Utility highway excavations.

The Council will continue to improve the co-ordination of street works on the network. The Council's current framework, which aims to contribute towards the reduction in inconvenience and disruption to residents, businesses and highway users, will be continually monitored for its effectiveness and updated as necessary.

A key component to the framework is ensuring that the travelling public and those who are affected by any works are kept fully informed at all stages. The Council will continue to use a variety of means to support the co-ordination of works and events with external stakeholders.

We will continue to work with the Midlands Service Improvement Group (MSIG) in identifying areas of best practice around the role of inter-authority operability and also in the co-ordination of major incidents, works and events.

The Council will continue to take an active role in the East Midlands Traffic Managers Forum. The Group, which represents the Traffic Managers from the following areas, has agreed to work together to improve the East Midlands regional approach to satisfying the Network Management Duty:

Derby	Nottingham
Derbyshire	Nottinghamshire
Leicester	Rutland
Leicestershire	Doncaster
Lincolnshire County	Rotherham
North East Lincolnshire	Sheffield
North Lincolnshire	Highways Agency
Northamptonshire	

Management of planned events

In addition to delays initiated by Statutory Undertakers and highway works, a small but significant amount of congestion is caused by the effect of traffic generated by planned events such as street markets, parades, special events, sporting events, carnivals etc.

In order to demonstrate a robust management system for planned events on or near the highway network, the Council is developing a system of event planning and liaison with the local District Authorities within Derbyshire and the Highway Authorities, which are adjacent to Derbyshire.

Many organisers of annual events are well aware of the processes and apply to the County Council or District Councils as appropriate. These events require co-ordination with other highway management issues such as road and street works, road closures and other matters taking place on the highway. There are already a number of recurring events that occur within and near to Derbyshire for which there are well established multi-agency co-ordination groups set up to carry out effective event planning.

The management of incidents and emergency responses

Incidents can happen on the highway network at any time, but will in some cases cause extensive delay to the network. Major incidents can cause traffic delay problems a considerable distance away. Many incidents arise because of road traffic collisions. Whilst on many occasions the priority is to assist the road users involved in the road traffic collisions, on occasions it can be not only traffic congestion, but also dealing with the environmental consequences as a result of a dangerous spillage from a damaged vehicle.

In many of these incidents, the Police will find it necessary to close, or at least restrict, the road to any traffic whilst the incident is dealt with. At certain times, the Council may be required to carry out emergency road works to repair a damaged road to make it safe for re-opening. However, a major or wide-ranging incident, such as extensive flooding, may require the enabling of the Local Authority Emergency Plan, which is overseen by the County's Emergency Planning Officer.

Winter service

Issues of snow and ice occur countywide across Derbyshire and, in particular, in the north of Derbyshire, which lies within the Pennine highlands of England. This area is subject to severe winter weather most winters, with many falls of snow often turning to blizzards with the associated delays and disruption to the road network.

The Winter Service is essential to maintaining communication, reducing disruption and congestion. It is very important to the economy, road safety and public health - especially access to hospitals.

The Council, when below freezing temperatures are forecast, will precautionary salt a large proportion of the road network, with all the major routes subject to salting. Annually, a leaflet is produced which shows the network of highways which will normally be gritted as a precautionary measure. Such a service seeks to minimise loss of life and injury to highway users, preventing damage to vehicles and property, and also minimising disruption and congestion on the highway network.

A new Winter Service Plan was approved in 2010, in the light of the latest national guidance. The guidance is based on the outcomes from the severe 2008/09 and 2009/10 winters.



Hand gritting in sensitive areas.

The Council is working with its partners to look at other issues beyond carriageways, for example, the work with the parishes on Snow Wardens, grit bins and footway clearing and car parks with the District Councils. Also, community self-help is supported by the Council. Furthermore, there will be greater emphasis given to 'Promoted Facilities' like transport interchanges. This and more information is available on the revised Winter Service (Gritting) pages of our website, which includes a link to our new Winter Service Plan:

http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport_roads/roads_traffic/road_maintenance/gritting/default.asp



Tourist signage.

Direction and tourist signing

Direction and tourist signing remains an important role of efficient transport network management, contributing to the smooth and safe running of the road network and minimising the degree to which 'lost' traffic wastes mileage, time and fuel. This work will continue. Additionally, reviews of signing will ensure consistency and promote the use of symbols where possible. A review of direction signing to rail stations will ensure that these are well signed for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists, and signing is also important for coaches to help direct them to drop off and pick-up points.

Freight management

Applying weight limits to roads, lorry routeing and enforcement will continue to help the roads to run efficiently, aiming to keep disruption caused by lorries travelling through villages to a minimum. Freight management to reduce maintenance requirements is also covered in Chapter 6.

Our Trading Standards division has been carrying out a Weight Restriction Enforcement Project on roads and bridges since 2002/03, following complaints from local residents and councillors. This is an important area of work which attracts the support and interest of residents in affected areas.



Improved lorry routeing (Ilkeston - Awwsworth).

Parking

Civil Parking Enforcement has been described in section 7.1 above.

Providing travel information

As previously mentioned, the Council works to improve travel information to ensure that it is accurate and that it provides timely information about events and incidents on the highway network, making sure that this is communicated to the travelling public by a variety of means, such as the internet and media reports. The Council liaises with local radio concerning delay matters which are not covered by the Police or other emergency services.

7.3 Network management opportunities

The Control Centre was initially implemented to provide for the Council's Rapid Response Teams, but the concept is being developed further to provide a more coordinated approach to the delivery of all capital and revenue works in order to maintain better control of finance and expenditure, and improved coordination of works.

There is further potential for route management strategies that make best use of existing transport infrastructure through use of traffic management adaptive systems which respond automatically to fluctuations in traffic flow for example, or localised improvements to remove bottlenecks. 'Intelligent Transport Systems' is a term used to include the uses of Information Technology to improve road safety and tackle congestion. The underlying technologies of satellite location, mobile telephony and wireless networks are already well established in order, for example, to communicate information about incidents. The need for such systems in Derbyshire will be reviewed, in order to consider the benefits of their use.

In addition to traffic management for events, car use can be reduced at such events through, for example, bus services, park and ride arrangements, discounted entry if arriving by public transport, and better access to public transport information.

Motorised traffic can have the effect of splitting up local communities. Improving social contact in neighbourhoods can be achieved, for example, through reduced traffic levels and slower speeds. Problem areas in Derbyshire will be identified and investigated. For example, traffic volumes have an adverse effect on the villages along the A623.

As mentioned above in section 7.2, 'quiet lanes' are designated as being appropriate for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and some other vehicles. Lorries, motorbikes, cars and vans are encouraged to use alternative routes. The Council is seeking initial trial areas, with a view to expanding them if they are successful. These schemes are also expected to improve natural environmental quality.

Opportunities will be taken, in partnership with bus operators, to develop bus priority measures where possible, in order to help bus services to run on time.

7.4 Network management long-term projects

For many years, the Council has successfully supported opportunities to move freight on to rail. Around 8 million tonnes of freight per annum has been transferred to the rail network. These efforts will continue in areas such as traditional aggregate movements from the Peak District quarries, and encouraging sustainable inter-modal freight interchanges in selected locations. The Council supports the establishment by Network Rail of a Strategic Freight Network to move high cube containers from ports to inland terminals by rail. The Council has supported the Regional Strategic Freight Study in 2009, which confirmed two sites south of Derby as the top two in the region, with Markham Vale, near Chesterfield, as the third. While the development of these sites is in varying states of progress, and they will be commercially driven and funded, the Council retains a direct interest in the Markham Vale site and supports the development of freight possibilities there with partners.

7.5 Guiding delivery - sources of evidence

In guiding delivery of efficient transport network management, we will use many sources of evidence.

Examples are as follows:

- Derbyshire transport challenges.
- Congestion data.
- Public surveys.
- Public reports/complaints.
- Asset Inventory.
- Highway Inspection Records.
- Control Centre Works Records.
- Midlands Service Improvement Group - policies and standards.
- Air Quality data.
- Improvement and Scrutiny Reviews.
- Best Practice advice.
- Environmental data, including environmental sensitivity mapping.
- Works activities monitoring data.

7.6 What we want to achieve in five years

- Making the best use of what we've got.
- Efficient Heavy Goods Vehicle routing e.g. avoiding villages or the Peak District National Park.
- Higher quality 'first time' road repairs.
- Effective travel information.
- Co-ordinated event planning.
- Permits scheme (i.e. the utility company books time on a highway through a permit system).
- Transfer of freight from road to rail.