

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

19 January 2021

Agenda item:

Wards: Boroughwide

Lorries and HGVs

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director for Environment & Regeneration

Lead member: Cllr Martin Whelton, Member for Housing, Regeneration and the Climate Emergency

Contact officers: Paul McGarry, Head of Future Merton
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Recommendations:

A. That members note the content of this report regarding HGV issues

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report provides Members with information regarding Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) movement throughout the borough and Council's limitations in responding to certain issues raised by residents.

2 DETAILS

2.1. Road Classification

2.2. UK highways are classified by category to identify the most suitable route for vehicles reaching their destination. Classification identifies routes that are best suited for different types and amounts of traffic.

2.3. All UK roads are classified within the six categories listed below:

- Motorways
- A Roads
- B Roads
- C Roads
- Unclassified Roads

2.4. Motorways

Not relevant to Merton

2.5. A Roads

These are major roads intended to provide large-scale transport links within or between areas, often crossing borough boundaries.

In Merton, major A roads include the A3 and A24 managed by TFL as part of the Transport London Road Network. Also known as the Primary Road Network, these are the preferred routes between nationally recognised primary destinations for example, A3 London to Portsmouth and A24 London to Dorking. These roads are characterised by green directional signage.

2.6. There are also other A roads in the borough that provide cross-borough traffic functions such as the A219 through Wimbledon, A298 Bushey Road, A218

Haydons Road and A236 Western Road through Mitcham. These are referred to as our Principal Road Network

2.7. **B roads**

2.8. These are roads intended to connect different parts of the borough and to feed traffic between A roads and smaller local roads. B roads are still important routes for traffic (including traffic travelling through the borough), but less so than an A road. These are referred to as our Non-Principle (classified) network.

2.9. Examples in Merton include B286 Martin Way, B279 Grand Drive, B272 Manor Road, B235 Worple Road and B235 Plough Lane.

2.10. **C Roads (un-numbered)**

2.11. These are generally smaller local routes intended to connect unclassified roads with A and B roads, and often linking local neighbourhoods to the rest of the network. C roads perform a more important function than an unclassified road but are expected to be used primarily for local journeys. These also form part of our Non-principle network.

2.12. Examples in Merton Include Hillcross Avenue, Copse Hill, Ridgway, Tamworth Lane, Church Road Mitcham, Arthur Road.

2.13. **Unclassified Road**

2.14. These are local roads, typically residential streets, intended for local traffic only. The of Merton's roads are unclassified and will generally have very low significance to traffic.

2.15. Typically, we would expect HGV traffic and through traffic to remain on A roads to pass through the borough and to use A, and B roads to reach destinations in the borough such as industrial areas or to service residential properties.

2.16. There is growing calls that HGVs should be prevented from using residential roads. However, it is important to note that almost all roads in Merton are residential in nature. Our A and B roads all have residential properties adjacent to them and there is a need to facilitate movement of commercial vehicles, including construction, waste and delivery vehicles.

2.17. There is of course a distinction between HGVs servicing residential parts of the borough, and HGVs using roads inappropriately as cut-through or 'rat-runs' to bypass A & B Roads. Over the years the council had created road closures to minimise HGV movements and through traffic (eg. South Wimbledon) and more recently, the roll out of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods as experiments to reduce all through traffic in unclassified roads.

2.18. The ability for sat-nav and other mapping apps to divert traffic in real-time into unclassified roads is an increasing problem and one that Low Traffic Neighbourhoods provide a solution to by physically blocking through traffic or controlling access via ANPR cameras.

2.3 **London lorry BAN (London Lorry Control Scheme LLCS)**

In response to persistent complaints from Londoners about the disturbance caused by larger Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) at night times and weekends, in 1986, the Greater London Council (GLC) introduced the LLCS in order to control freight movement. This was reviewed in 2017. The scheme aims to reduce unnecessary through traffic, while ensuring that London's economic activity continues. This scheme only applies to 18T vehicles and is controlled and managed by London Councils.

The hours of operation for LLCS controls are:

- Monday – Friday 9pm to 7am (including 9pm Friday night to 7am Saturday morning)
- Saturday – 1pm to 7am Monday morning
- Normal restrictions apply during public and bank holidays

2.3.1 Complaints regarding 18T vehicles are reported to London Councils who do undertake enforcement. However, it is not normal practice to receive feedback regarding the outcome of any enforcement that may have been carried out. Although some generalised pan London feedback is provided via London Council's annual reporting structure.

2.4 Local Lorry Ban

2.4.1 Over the years, each London borough including Merton has introduced local 7.5T HGV bans. This was introduced area wide as well as localised restrictions. Many of these schemes were aimed at inappropriate traffic seeking to cut through an area. This involved the appropriate statutory consultation and erection of signage. The 7.5T HGV ban applies to through traffic but it does permit access which makes enforcement challenging.

2.4.2 Historically, where there was evidence of safety associated with rat running by HGVs, the Council introduced width restrictions. Width restrictions are effective but they do have an adverse impact on Emergency services, service vehicles and legitimate deliveries, which is increasingly an issue. They can also restrict access for large transits, buses, community/mobility vehicles and delivery vehicles. The few width restrictions in the borough are often subject to vandalism resulting in an increase in the Council's revenue budget for repairs. Such features also displace the problem on to neighbouring roads which is why a more holistic Low Traffic Neighbourhood approach is seen as a more appropriate solution.

2.4.3 Freight deliveries are essential in ensuring that the demand for goods and services in London can be met. In an ideal world that this should be undertaken with minimum disruption to all parties; this, however, would require coordinated effective and efficient management maximising delivery windows and taking advantage of out of hour deliveries where possible, to free up space during peak times on a congested network. This is not something that a local authority can do in isolation.

2.5 Speeding & HGVs

2.5.1 The number of complaints regarding speeding, perception of speeding and HGVs is increasing. This may be in part to residential streets having more home deliveries, home improvements, increase in development in certain parts of the borough and more people working from home, thereby noticing the day to day traffic that perhaps they had gone unnoticed before the pandemic. There is also some rat-running and perception of speeding issues that prevail across the borough.

2.5.2 It is also believed that the increase in 'rat-running' is associated with drivers following satellite navigation systems which has also caused issues with construction traffic not following designated routes to sites.

2.5.3 Local authorities are not responsible for speed enforcement as it is a criminal act. The Police are responsible for enforcement and as such speeding related

- concerns should be reported directly to the Police but it is important to acknowledge that their resources are stretched dealing with other priorities.
- 2.5.4 There is work underway with London Councils to explore transferring this duty to Local Authorities to enforce on behalf of the Met Police, but this is some way off from being implemented and may require primary legislation.
- 2.5.5 There is a London wide policy to install safety cameras at locations with a history of people being Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI), as a result of speeding and red light contravention. The criteria is established by TfL / Police. The criteria states that in order to support the installation of a Red light / speed camera, there must have been a minimum of four KSI collisions in the preceding three- year period, two of which must have been as a result of speeding. The criteria for introducing cameras is set so that the roads with the worst safety record can be addressed first.
- 2.5.6 Although the criteria is established by TfL / Police, the Council can apply for a speed camera (subject to criteria being met) and the Council must fund the introduction of the camera. The Police manage the cameras and any income from these cameras go to the Treasury.
- 2.5.7 Speed cameras are only effective within a short length of the carriageway which often results in drivers slowing down on approach to the speed camera and then speed as soon as they clear the camera restriction.
- 2.5.8 For locations with speed related issues TfL, in partnership with the Metropolitan Police undertake many speed management initiatives, including Community Road Watch. Community Roadwatch is a road safety initiative which aims to reduce speeding in residential areas, and gives local residents the opportunity to work side by side with their local police teams, and use speed detection equipment to identify speeding vehicles in their communities. Concerns from members of the public on speeding, and other road offences, can be sent to Roadsafe London. This portal is an information and intelligence gathering tool that can inform police activity. The following link shows the address for the Roadsafe London website - <http://content.met.police.uk/Site/roadsafelondon>
- 2.5.9 The most effective traffic calming features are vertical deflections such as Road humps / speed tables. These features often result in noise and vibration and generate complaints and petitions for their removal. This is particularly prevalent in parts of the borough with Victorian, Edwardian and inter-war suburban housing and those with sash windows. Other features such as buildouts and chicanes often result in complaints due to loss of on-street parking capacity and due to site constraints such as crossovers, are not always a suitable option. At certain locations, chicanes / priority systems result in an increase in speed as drivers attempt to get through the gap before the on-coming traffic.
- 2.5.10 The introduction of traffic calming is also restricted pending on the nature of the road and its traffic function, e.g A and B roads, emergency routes such as routes to local hospitals etc.
- 2.5.11 The majority of complaints are about buses and HGVs. Although some of these vehicles may be travelling over the speed limit, due to the size of the vehicles and the noise particularly skip lorries, the perception of speed and safety is a greater issue.
- 2.5.12 In case of speeding buses, it is suggested that all complaints are reported directly to TfL via their website. Experience shows that reports from the Council are not taken as seriously as individual road users / residents submitting complaints directly.

- 2.5.13 In case of HGVs, in some instances, complaints from residents directly to the companies has yield some success, particularly those who want to maintain a good reputation locally.
- 2.6 Many complaints regarding speed of HGVs appear to be based on the noise and vibration felt within a property. This can, however, be due to a number of factors such as road condition; nature of traffic calming features and their condition; condition of the property itself; it has also been noted that often such complaints are made following a roof extension.

3. Additional info on HGVS

- 3.1 The Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) which is a voluntary accreditation scheme for fleet operators which aims to raise the level of quality within fleet operations, and to demonstrate which operators are achieving exemplary levels of best practice in safety, efficiency, and environmental protection. The scheme is managed by TfL, but includes many operators from outside the Capital.
- 3.2 At the basic FORS Bronze accreditation level, it confirms that an operator employs good practices. This includes demonstrating dedication to driver and vehicle safety, combined with improving operating practices through effective monitoring of fuel and tyre usage, vehicle maintenance and performance management.
- 3.3 There are currently over 5000 accredited members across the transport and haulage industry. Adopting these practices can reduce accidents and improve fuel efficiency. For companies to sign up to any scheme there needs to be tangible benefits to membership. FORS can demonstrate a proven track record to prospective members.
- 3.4 The Council cannot force anyone organisation to sign up to this but as far as the businesses in the town centres are concerned perhaps this can be promoted through the business partners such as Love Wimbledon and other partners and stakeholders. This, however, will not address the other HGV activities, particularly skip lorries that are commissioned by individuals.

3.5 Development Sites

As part of all planning stage, developers are required to develop a construction management plan which must be agreed by the Council. Construction management plans are about reducing the impact of vehicles used in construction. As this is a planning condition, not complying to say a prescribed access route would be a planning enforcement matter.

4. ENFORCEMENT

The key element with any scheme which sets out to control behaviour by use of a penal enforcement regime is to maximise compliance.

Any revision to a Traffic Management Order requires a public and statutory consultation and significant resources to complete.

ANPR and CCTV can provide consistent levels of enforcement and evidence of contravention but this would be an extremely costly undertaking. This would also involve reviewing all the signage across the borough.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1 The Council routinely receives complaints about the following Issues

- HGVs using residential roads as ‘rat runs’ at all times during the day and night
- High level of noise from construction vehicles both around sites and travelling to and from them.
- Noise pollution from buses and skip lorries
- Drivers parking in unsuitable areas having rest breaks prior to commencement of the control to avoid non-compliance within the LLCS
- Physical vibrations felt from the movement of HGVs and busses
- Restricted roads are often not suitable and too narrow for HGV movement
- Speed humps and tables and the condition of the road surface add to the noise pollution and vibration
- Complaints about possible damage to property

5.2 To address all the various complaints, the Council would need to undertake a comprehensive research, investigation, impact analysis and consultation to ensure that any change would meet the needs of residents / businesses whilst allowing the freight industry to continue to fulfil their important role for London. This would also need the involvement of neighbouring boroughs and needs to be linked to LLCS. This would be a resource and time intensive project that would require a considerable amount of funding to address comprehensively.

6 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

6.1 None for the purpose of this report.

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None for the purpose of this report

8. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None for the purpose of this report

9. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None for the purpose of this report

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None for the purpose of this report

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None for the purpose of this report

APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet Report. 15 June 2020.

Merton’s Active & Healthy Travel Response to Covid-19

<https://democracy.merton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=3689&Ver=4>