

Appendix K: Network Management Duty

Network Management Plan

Staffordshire County Council set up an organisational structure some years ago which fully embodies and facilitates the Network Management philosophy. This consists of a dedicated Network Management Unit (NMU) made up of experienced professionals delivering the ethos that underpins the objectives of the 2004 Traffic Management Act (TMA), NRSWA and other relevant legislation.

The key functions of the NMU

- Delivery of a co-ordinated, planned and effective response to the TMA and Network Management Duty (NMD) across the whole of the organisation.
- Strategic Management of Civil Parking Enforcement.
- Provision of a focal point for the authority, championing optimised use of the highway network for all road users.
- Influencing, leading and directing internal and external highway stakeholders.
- Ensuring implementation of all actions in a timely manner to deliver compliance with the NMD.

Staffordshire provides an important public sector leading role in every aspect of the NMD, with high level representation on National HAUC and other strategic bodies as well as participating fully in all facets of the information sharing and bench marking delivered through the West Mercia (Shire & Unitaries) Traffic Managers Forum. Through this initiative a Joint Vision (see below) for the provision of the NMD is fully supported, and underpins the way Staffordshire operates, both in our own works delivery and how partners/stakeholders are treated.

Joint West Mercia (Shire & Unitaries) Vision

“Improved delivery of the Network Management Duty through cross-boundary working using best value principles thereby enabling consistency, effectiveness and efficiency of delivery”

Network Management Policies

The majority of the following criteria is identified in the Network Management Duty Guidance as the principal areas which local traffic authorities must embrace to fulfil their duty:

Intervention criteria

1. Considering the needs of all road users.
2. Civil Enforcement regimes.
3. Co-ordinating and planning works and known events.
4. Gathering information and providing information needs.
5. Incident management and contingency planning.
6. Dealing with traffic growth.
7. Working with all stakeholders - internal and external.
8. Ensuring parity with others.
9. Providing evidence to demonstrate network management.

The following sets out what we have done over the period of LTP2 and intend to do during the LTP3 period and how we intend to monitor our performance.

1. Considering the needs of all road users

Key Issues

- A structured approach to the allocation of road space must be embraced.
- All forms of user should be recognised and catered for, e.g. pedestrians/cyclists on a level footing with vehicular traffic.
- The road hierarchy system needs to be constantly interrogated to provide consistency for stakeholders, fairness and measured actions.
- Hierarchies need to take account of other policies and plans such as Asset Management Plans, Strategic Objectives and Community Involvement.

1.1 The County Council have long-term ambitions, which include working with all stakeholders including Staffordshire Police, in order to establish a joint Local Traffic Control Centre. This will combine information gathering capabilities to ensure effective actions are taken by all in a timely, understood and well managed manner.

(LTP2 Action - Steady but constant progress has been made to the fulfilment of these objectives, with changes to the organisation's structure implemented to conjoin the Asset and Network Management Teams.)

1.2 Additional measures for the improvement of information dissemination to the public and other highway stakeholders will be considered and implemented. This could include additional and reciprocal use of Variable Message Sign (VMS) facilities, better and more accurate links with the media and use of information sharing software packages.

(LTP2 Action - Arrangements have been made for the use of Highway Agency (HA) National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC) and Regional Traffic Control Centre (RTCC) Variable Message Signs (VMS) and website to advise the travelling public of serious congestion caused by major events in the county.)

1.3 Additional enforcement techniques provided within the TMA (Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)/over-run charging regimes) will be implemented/refined within the life of the current LTP.

(LTP2 Action - NMU have capabilities in proactive co-ordination of planned activities through robust inspection routines with dedicated Network Inspectors aimed at tackling the causes of congestion. A team of dedicated Network Inspectors is based in the County Council's Area Offices. They are the eyes and ears of the NMU, carrying out routine inspections and reporting regularly to the Network Co-ordinators who are mainly office based. This working relationship allows necessary enforcement to be applied commensurate with actual events on the ground.)

1.4 Continuing resources including new information sharing software will be directed to promote and improve cross boundary linkages and information sharing with neighbouring authorities. The West Mercia (Shires & Unitaries) Traffic Managers Forum aims to "improve the West Midlands regional approach to implementing the Network Management Duty (See Joint Vision above). Momentum will be maintained in working with other highway stakeholders (Borough/ District Councils, emergency services, HA, National and Regional Control Centres etc.) to improve joint adherence to NMD.

(LTP2 Action - Regular joint meetings with neighbouring authorities have been held to exchange information on "zones of influence" on the network adjacent to authority boundaries and to develop joint initiatives. Sharing information via regional committees/working groups regarding working policies, priorities and events affecting the strategic network and other authority areas has underpinned this philosophy.)

1.5 Continuing efforts will be directed to improving information sharing for planned activities to the public. A 'live' website displaying all present and planned activities will be available imminently, certainly within the life of LTP3 and is presently being considered in line with the desire to share information on numerous platforms that would provide a 'national' cross boundary website for the public.

(LTP2 Action - A diary of events is maintained and utilised to ensure that affected parts of the highway network are protected, resulting in no conflicts of interest between events and activity on the highway. The Council's website reflects forthcoming events.)

1.6 Continuing focus will be maintained in the analysis and where practical identification of physical measures to relieve any network of congestion 'hotspots'.

(LTP2 Action - The NMU has developed capabilities to measure vehicle journey duration. This, alongside other methods, can be used to evaluate congestion "hotspots" and allow recommendations re. physical engineering measures to relieve any congestion.)

1.7 Further work will be undertaken to review Staffordshire's road hierarchy. The hierarchy will categorise roads in terms of function and will provide the foundation of a coherent and consistent approach to managing the road network.

(LTP2 Action - Development of the hierarchy review commenced during the LTP2 period.)



2. Staffordshire Civil Enforcement Regimes

2.1 The County Council is committed to working with local communities/authorities for the successful operation of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) across Staffordshire as part of a balanced strategy. The strategy aims to make efficient use of our roads whilst encouraging sustainable travel and improving our environment.

Parking controls have historically been criticised in the media and on occasions this has been deserved. In Staffordshire there has been general acceptance of the principles that underpin this important service, resulting in adverse comments only being levelled as a result of inappropriate one-off actions. However, when carried out sensitively and in the context of a wider strategy, CPE gives local communities the ability to manage

parking for the benefit of many. It can greatly enhance the quality of life for people living in town centres, improve conditions for pedestrians (particularly the elderly and disabled people), ease traffic flow, improve short-term accessibility of the town centres, support public transport, make deliveries easier and boost the local economy.

(LTP2 Action - CPE is active in all eight District and Borough Councils of Staffordshire; Stafford Borough, East Staffordshire Borough, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough, Staffordshire Moorlands District, South Staffordshire District, Cannock Chase District, Lichfield District and Tamworth Borough.

The County Council has worked closely with each of the District and Borough Councils, Staffordshire Police and other key stakeholders during the development of the scheme and continues to enjoy close co-operation in its running.

A key element of the project is the involvement of Stoke-on-Trent City Council with whom the County and District Councils have formed a partnership to create a single Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) processing unit for the whole county.

The implementation of Phases I & II has resulted in the County Council meeting the objectives of the LTP2 stating:

"We are making good progress towards the decriminalisation of parking offences throughout the county. We have examined the viability of the overall project with our feasibility study being completed in July 2005". (Cabinet approval followed quickly in September 2005).

2.2 Performance of the service is demonstrated in the latest Annual Report, appended to this section of the LTP submission. Initial comments of the Chair to the Staffordshire Parking Board are of importance in setting out the primary objective and outcomes of this important facet of Network Management.

Foreword to 2009/10 Annual CPE Report

"As Chairman of the Staffordshire Parking Board I am pleased to present Staffordshire County Council's Annual Parking Report for the 2009/10 financial year.

Illegal parking is an issue which has plagued our citizens for many years and under the banner of "Clear Streets" the County Council, partnered with the District and Borough Councils, seeks to resolve these problems and make our roads more accessible and safer for all.

The Annual Report explains how Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is operated and managed throughout the county and how it exists for the benefit of everyone, including the motorist but particularly vulnerable highway users who are more at risk from dangerous parking.

This year was also the first year that CPE has been in operation for the whole of the county. In March 2009 the remaining four District and Borough Councils adopted CPE and began enforcement of parking restrictions shortly afterwards. This is excellent news as it means there is now a united approach to parking enforcement leading to less confusion for the motorist no matter where they park.

The period covered by this Report has also seen some new developments in Parking Law with the introduction of dropped kerb enforcement, allowing drivers who park blocking residents' driveways or where the kerb has been lowered to help pedestrians, especially disabled citizens, to cross the road.

It is also worth noting that Civil Parking Enforcement is not designed to make money for the County Council and, where surplus income is accrued, that money is reinvested into the public highway, creating a better road network for the residents and visitors of Staffordshire.

Please take the time to read through this report and any feedback or comments can be directed to clear.streets@staffordshire.gov.uk.

Chair of Staffordshire Parking Board.

3. Co-ordinating and planning works and known events

Key Issues

- Authorities need to ensure that all works are carried out with sufficient urgency, or in line with proper timescales and durations appropriate to the works and/or category of road.
- Works should not be looked at in isolation, but should be co-ordinated.
- Skips, scaffolding or similar are often left on the highway during works to buildings next to the highway. Authorities should ensure that the obstruction to highway users is minimised and look at how the obstructions affect the more vulnerable users.
- Review programmes and systems of work regularly with representatives from utilities and other contractors.
- Forthcoming events should be considered when planning works with collection of information on forthcoming events, together with effective event planning.
- Reference should be made to other policies and plans such as the Asset Management Plan.
- Authorities should review past processes.

3.1 Continuing commitment is given to ongoing liaison with external bodies facilitating the use of Staffordshire Network in periods of emergency and at other times when the network allows.

(LTP2 Action - The County Council have, in consultation with the emergency services, HA and neighbouring highway authorities, investigated and put in place a series of contingency options and diversion routes. In accordance with HA's needs, Tactical Diversion Routes have been agreed utilising important Staffordshire roads for use when the National Strategic Network is not available due to unforeseen incident.)

3.2 We will strengthen proactive co-ordination of planned activities. We anticipate that annual programme co-ordination will develop further to the assessment of five-year programmes within the life of LTP3.

(LTP2 Action - NMU continue to take proactive co-ordination of planned activities through improved quarterly co-ordination. Regular quarterly co-ordination meetings are held with Statutory Undertakers and their contractors, Staffordshire Highways and NMU. As well as the statutory requirement to hold quarterly meetings, annual co-ordination meetings were introduced in 2007 and continue to be held each year to identify potential network issues further in advance.

Ongoing partnership working with undertakers improves forward and construction planning. The County Council continues to work with all undertakers and encourage joint occupation of road space to improve forward planning and minimise highway network obstruction.

Improved day to day co-ordination of minor and reactive activities is delivered through an organisational structure allowing office based Network Co-ordinators and Area based Network Inspectors to liaise over the day to day co-ordination of activities.)

3.3 The County Council seeks to continue promoting and improving cross boundary linkages and information sharing with neighbouring authorities, whilst working with other highway stakeholders (Borough/District Councils, emergency services, the HA, National and Regional Control Centres etc.) to improve joint adherence to NMD.

(LTP2 Action - See 1.2, 1.4 and 1.5 above.)

4. Gathering information and providing information needs

Key Issues

- The gathering of information is essential to enable the creation of benchmarks, assessment of performance and the setting of targets, allowing comparison of the County Council's performance alongside that of others.
- Having good and accurate information enables an authority to advise network users of problems, thus allowing them to make more informed choices.

4.1 Options for the improvement of passing information to the public and other highway stakeholders will be considered and implemented. This could include additional and reciprocal use of VMS facilities and better and more accurate links with the media.

(LTP2 Action - See 1.2 above.)

4.2 The County Council will continue benchmark performance and development of the NMD by refreshing detailed process maps and business case analysis for all highway control processes and introduce/refine robust procedures to ensure compliance, control and viability. Detailed process mapping will be developed further during the life of LTP3 so that the business processes required for Network Management efficiently and accurately integrate with the Staffordshire Highways Quality Management System.

(LTP2 Action - Detailed process mapping has been completed and implemented. Benchmarking with other LHAs in the region through MSIG and technical groups is well advanced and ensures best practice is adopted.)

4.3 We will continue to deliver proactive co-ordination of planned activities through utilising robust inspection routines with dedicated Network Inspectors. This, together with improved information management, will assist with tackling the main causes of congestion.

(LTP2 Action – See 1.2 above alongside arrangements in place to use the HA, National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC) and Regional Traffic Control Centre (RTCC), Variable Message Signs (VMS), and website to advise the travelling public of serious congestion caused by major events in the county.)

4.4 Regular maintenance and review of traffic management infrastructure (signs, loops and signal timings) is essential in the support of a robust Network Management Plan. We will continue to direct resources to ensure that the current infrastructure is appropriate, sufficient and proportionate to the requirements of the network and the traffic using it.

(LTP2 Action - Ongoing cyclical programmes for the maintenance of TM infrastructure is in operation, ensuring countywide provision as necessary and appropriate is provided.)

4.5 Continuing review, appraisal and monitoring of the road hierarchy will be maintained recognising level of use and function (both current and intended).

(LTP2 Action - The review has been ongoing for the duration of the LTP2 period and the County Council will continue to produce an accurate inventory of the attributes of every road on the highway network. Attributes include:

- Road type/classification/traffic sensitivity/traffic flow/bus route.
- Indicative proportion of HCV/HGV.
- Maintenance category.
- Emergency tactical routes.
- Abnormal load route.
- TRO information.)

5. Incident management and contingency planning

Key Issues

Authorities must have contingency plans in place, taking account of the relative importance of different roads to the various road users dealing with unplanned events and ensuring all parties involved are fully consulted during the development stage. Co-ordinating with adjacent authorities where necessary and working closely with the emergency services both in the management of the incident and the active management of its effects on the road network is essential.

5.1 The County Council will, in consultation with the

- emergency services
- Highways Agency
- neighbouring highway authorities

investigate and put in place a series of contingency options/diversion routes. We will seek to ensure that, wherever possible, actions do not exacerbate the situation being addressed.

(LTP2 Action - See 3.1 above, further meetings have been held with Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Police to determine contingency plans to be put into action in the event of a serious incident at the Kingsbury Oil depot. Kingsbury is close to the county boundary and any such incident could impact heavily on Staffordshire's highway network. Staffordshire County Council has carried out its own review of similar sites and has not identified any issues.)

6. Dealing with traffic growth

Key Issues

- Authorities should identify locations and develop mechanisms for the ranking of areas of congestion.
- Authorities should identify current and future causes of congestion.
- Authorities should look into trends in traffic growth and consider appropriate ways to deal with this.

6.1 The County Council monitors the use of the Staffordshire highway network and, through capital investment, primarily possible as a result of Integrated Transport Block (supported to a limited degree by other capital funding), seeks to introduce improvements to relieve the network of congestion 'hotspots'. This has been reinforced by recent organisational change such that the Traffic Manager is lead officer for funding allocation and programme development. Consultations on the revised network traffic sensitivity designations will be undertaken with all stakeholders including Staffordshire Police and District and Borough Councils which may further affect the way events and activities are timed (such as abnormal loads, refuse collection, etc.).

(LTP2 Action - See 1.6 above, further the County Council works closely with Staffordshire Police to ensure that congestion and disruption caused by the movement of abnormal loads is kept to a minimum. NMU tries to ensure that loads move during non-traffic sensitive times of the day and do not move on parts of the network when they are likely to be affected by high attendance events. There have been a number of major capital projects, such as Leacroft Island and Pipehill Junction, funded as part of the LTP2 Block Allocation that have made significant contributions to the reduction and management of congestion.)

Monitoring

Indicators and targets are still to be determined.

7. Working with all stakeholders - internal and external

Key Issues

- Authorities must be aware of how their actions will impact on adjacent authorities' networks. The NMD on authorities does not stop at its borders, taking specific consideration for the effects of their actions on the motorway and trunk road network, giving due regard to the HA's role.
- Authorities should consider how to implement the requirement in the TMA Act to facilitate movement across the entire network. Traffic Managers should ensure that all roads are categorised in a consistent manner on either side of the boundary.
- Roads that provide the main access to a community or region should also be identified.
- Information on works in the street should be provided to utilities, contractors and adjoining authorities.
- Any Abnormal Loads travelling in the area will need cross boundary co-ordination working with the Police to establish routes for abnormal loads travelling through the network.
- Authorities need to involve the Police in the decision making process, sharing information about planning and contingencies.
- Authorities need to consider how best to use Passenger Transport Executives, bus operators and the Traffic Commissioners to ensure the most efficient use of the network and consulting with Passenger Transport Executives over works likely to cause inconvenience to bus routes.
- Authorities should consult with the public to inform decisions, and after completion of schemes to monitor effectiveness.
- Authorities should work together with local businesses, retailers and representatives from the freight and road haulage industry, identifying and signing routes that are suitable for lorries.

7.1 The County Council has long-term ambitions, working with Staffordshire Police, to develop the business case for the introduction of a Local Traffic Control Centre to combine information gathering capabilities to ensure effective actions are taken by both parties in a timely manner.

(LTP2 Action - See 1.1 above.)

7.2 Options for the improvement of information dissemination to the public and other highway stakeholders will be considered and implemented as resources and opportunity arises. This could include additional and reciprocal use of VMS facilities, and better and more accurate links with the media.

(LTP2 Action - See 1.1, 1.2, 1.4 and 1.5 above. Further the Traffic Manager leads a DfT working group looking into the enhanced use of signage/VMS to provide timely and useful data for the travelling public.)

7.3 We aim to reinforce proactive co-ordination of planned activities through improved quarterly co-ordination, underpinned by strong links to partnership working with undertakers to improve forward and construction planning. Consideration will be given to the need for, and implementation of, a Staffordshire (key highway links only) permit scheme, which in turn is likely to form part of the regional scheme currently under consideration by the West Mercia Shire Councils.

(LTP2 Action - The County Council along with the other West Mercia Shire authorities have agreed, in principle, to the development of a joint permit scheme, and significant progress had been made towards its development. However, recent DfT indication in respect to justification of business case goes a considerable way to encouraging further and detailed investigations. Continued efforts being made with all promoters to disclose and share five-year programmes to identify network conflicts and opportunities for joint working arrangements further in advance.)

7.4 Information management is key to the proper control of any network. This, alongside strong linkages with planning authorities, improving integration of developer promoted land use, and the encouragement of innovative working practices and methods of construction, promotes an open and receptive ethos leading to more efficient use

of valuable highway space. A recurring theme throughout this submission is the need to continually reinforce and demonstrate the advantages of efficient working with other highway stakeholders (Borough/ District Councils, emergency services, the HA, National and Regional Control Centres etc.) to improve joint adherence to NMD as laid out in the TMA.

(LTP2 Action – See 1.2, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5 and 3.3 above.)

7.5 Key to highest quality management of the network is improved and ongoing dissemination of information/actions to the public for planned activities. The important tools to facilitate this include the regular maintenance and review of traffic management infrastructure (signs, loops and signal timings), the review and regular monitoring of the road hierarchy (use and function current and intended).

(LTP2 Action - See 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 3.5, 3.6 and 4.4 above.)

7.6 The operation of a robust and successful Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) regime in Staffordshire allows action to be taken to address obstruction on main roads and key junctions.

(LTP2 Action - See 2.1 and 2.2 above.)

Monitoring

Indicators and targets are still to be determined.

8. Ensuring parity with others

Key Issue

- Authorities must give the same priority to work being carried out by external sources as they do with their own highway working teams.

8.1 Staffordshire Highways will continue to work towards operational practices that fully embrace TMA compliant notification routines to achieve full parity with utilities.

(LTP2 Action - Further compliance, as part of an ongoing regime, aiming for full TMA notification requirements, has been achieved within 2010/11, including the provision of the vast majority of Highway Authority notification of its own works.)

8.2 Over the course of LTP3 the NMU will continue to tackle the causes of congestion. This will be achieved by:

- Enhanced quarterly co-ordination of planned activities on Staffordshire’s network.
- Partnership working with undertakers of works to improve forward and construction planning.
- Improved day to day co-ordination of minor and reactive activities.
- Robust inspection routines with dedicated Network Inspectors.

(LTP2 Actions – See 1.3, 1.6,3.2 and 6.1 above.)

8.3 The introduction of enforcement techniques provided by the TMA:

- FPNs.
- Over-run charging regimes.
- A Staffordshire-wide or regional permit scheme.

These support parity, demonstrating commitment to evenness and a fair minded approach to necessary control of the highway network.

(LTP2 Action - See 1.3 and 7.3 above. Development work has progressed in connection with possible introduction of a Staffordshire-wide or regional permit scheme.)

8.4 Monitoring

Quality Performance Measures (QPMs) have been established by HAUC UK in 2009 supported by DfT. These have replaced the proposed ‘Parity Indicators’ that were originally drafted following the release of the NMD.

Development of national QPMs allowing robust benchmarking continues and may be subject to change within LTP3. Present QPMs are detailed in Section 9.

9. Providing evidence to demonstrate network management

Key Issues

- Authorities need to monitor the effectiveness of their policies, with the aim to improve network performance using indicators to prove they are achieving this. Indicators should, as far as possible, match the ones in their LTPs and be outcome not output based.
- Authorities need to decide what data they need, how it will be collated and how the findings will be shared with the stakeholders.

Monitoring

9.1 This is an area where the performance and success of any NMU can be demonstrated and encompasses the strategic essence/commitment for control of the network. Evidence can be set against the three causes of congestion.

- Unplanned events/incident management
- Planned activities/events
- Volume based congestion

Unplanned events/incident management

- Time taken in hours for routine traffic plan to be restored following a Category ‘A’ incident (in UTC areas only).
- Percentage of incidents where information is passed on to local radio within 30 minutes.
- Percentage of strategic routes covered by Network Contingency plans.

Planned activity (subject to development of network QPMs)

- Duration of works (number of days) on Traffic Sensitive (TS) routes measured in days/km, by works promoter.
- Numbers of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued by authorities measured in numbers as a percentage of all works, by works promoter.
- Number of early starts allowed by authorities measured in numbers as a % of all works, by works promoter.
- Number of over-runs identified as a percentage of all works, by works promoter.
- Percentage of works commencing on planned date as a percentage of all works, by works promoter.
- Number of extensions sought as percentage of all works, by works promoter.

Congestion

- The County Council's performance in this area will be best measured by the general public in terms of journey time reliability. If a journey normally takes 20 minutes, unless there is any other obvious cause of delay, a longer journey time will give the impression that congestion was the cause.
- Targets and indicators are still to be determined.
- The County Council will report annually on its performance against network management and will instil a culture of continuous improvement.