

18. Sustainable Freight Distribution Strategy

18.1 Introduction

Efficient and sustainable freight distribution is important for the economy and for supporting quality of life.

Warwickshire's central location within the country makes the area an attractive place for businesses to locate, particularly given the excellent road and rail links that exist towards the East Midlands, the South East and London.

Despite a number of recent high profile closures, the West Midlands still has a significant element of manufacturing (particularly in terms of exports) which generates large numbers of freight movements. There is also a strong service and knowledge base to the local economy, along with logistics and distribution. There are substantial facilities for this sector based at Hams Hall and Birch Coppice in North Warwickshire, Bermuda Park between Nuneaton and Bedworth, Cross Point in north east Coventry and Keresley in north west Coventry. Further facilities can be found just beyond the County boundary at Magna Park in Leicestershire, and Daventry International Railfreight Terminal (DIRFT) in Northamptonshire.

The majority of road-based freight movements within Warwickshire are on the motorway and trunk road network with the M6, M40 and M42 being most heavily used. Routes such as the A46/M69 also provide a key link for HGV movements.

The West Coast Main Line forms the principal north-south route for long distance freight movements by rail, particularly in terms of long distance container (intermodal) traffic to/from the ports at Felixstowe and Harwich. The Birmingham – Solihull – Leamington Spa – Oxford line also carries a significant volume of traffic to/from the deep sea port at Southampton. Apart from the intermodal terminals at Hams Hall and Birch Coppice, other railfreight facilities can be found at Bedworth (oil), Kingsbury (oil), Daw Mill (coal), Rugby (virtual quarry) and Keresley (distribution).

18.2 Policy Context

18.2.1 National

The following table shows how the Freight Distribution Strategy links to the national transport goals and challenges. This clearly demonstrates how an effective strategy can help to tackle climate change whilst supporting economic growth, equality of opportunity, better safety, security and health and quality of life.

18.2.2 Regional

The National Transport Goals support the wider aims of both the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and the West Midlands Economic Strategy. The Regional Transport Strategy, and Sub-Regional Transport Strategy set out how transport can support sustainable growth, as well as making a significant contribution to addressing the challenges of climate change.

Much of the implementation of freight policy within the Region is undertaken through the West Midlands Regional Transport Strategy, Local Transport Plans and Freight Quality Partnerships. These have been established in a number of areas to bring forward improvements as a result of partnership working between local authorities, the freight industry, business and commerce representatives, environmental groups and local residents.

18.2.3 Local

The control of heavy goods vehicle movements through or near environmentally sensitive areas in Warwickshire is currently achieved by systematic intelligence gathering through Parish Councils and contact with operators. It is intended that this approach, together with the following policy on Amenity Weight Limits, be reviewed to determine if there is a more effective way of achieving compliance.

The introduction of Amenity Weight Limits are currently considered as a last resort, subject to the following criteria:

- A significant problem caused by HGVs unnecessarily travelling through an area can be demonstrated;
- An appreciable reduction in the number of HGVs is attainable;
- An alternative route is available which is suitable for HGV traffic as regards its alignment and strength;
- There is an overall environmental benefit in redirecting the HGVs, not simply a transfer of the problem from one area to another;
- A scheme can be designed which gives a clearly signed route which can be easily understood by drivers and is likely to be largely self enforcing; and,
- The area is compact enough to allow enforcement by the Police.

18.3 Freight Movement in Warwickshire

18.3.1 Road

Most freight is moved by road at present and this will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future. Due to its location in the national Motorway and Trunk road network, Warwickshire experiences a large amount of through movement of short and long distance road based freight haulage. Vehicle movements are also prominent in the vicinity of Hams Hall, Birch Coppice and Daventry International Rail Freight Terminals, and around the industrial estates in the main towns of the County. The town centres also experience lorry movements in relation to shop deliveries. There are several quarries and landfill sites in the County that generate large numbers of lorry movements, often impacting on some of the more rural areas.

Through its work with the Warwickshire Freight Quality Partnership and local Parish and Town Councils the County Council has defined and agreed the best available routes for heavy goods vehicles travelling within and through Warwickshire. A map showing these routes has been produced and distributed within the road haulage industry. A review of the map has been undertaken with a second edition being published in 2009.

A study of lorry parking facilities and driver amenities within the West Midlands region has identified a need for additional overnight rest and driving break parking facilities on or near to the M40 from Junction 16 (A3400 south of Hockley Heath) to Junction 12 (B4451 Gaydon); and the M42 from the junction with the M6 northwards to the regional boundary with the East Midlands. The study also identified a potential need for additional parking facilities for use by goods vehicles waiting to make deliveries within or close to a number of industrial areas in and around Warwickshire.

The County Council receive regular complaints about drivers of heavy goods vehicles using inappropriate or weight restricted routes. This is often as a result of dependence on inadequate GPS technology (sat nav).

18.3.2 Rail

The location of Warwickshire in the national rail network results in a large amount of through rail based freight movements. Key corridors for rail freight movement in Warwickshire are the West Coast Main Line (for Birmingham, the North, Scotland, London and the Channel Tunnel), Birmingham-Nuneaton-Leicester (for the East Midlands and Felixstowe), Birmingham-Solihull-Leamington Spa-Banbury (for Southampton and the South East), Birmingham-Tamworth (for Teeside and the North East) and Nuneaton-Water Orton (for Bescot Yard).

Key generators of rail freight in Warwickshire are Hams Hall and Birch Coppice inter-modal terminals, Murco LPG (Bedworth), Daw Mill Colliery (near Over Whitacre), Rugby virtual quarry, Warwickshire Oil Storage (Kingsbury) and Kineton MOD. In addition, Daventry International Railfreight Terminal (DIRFT) is located just outside the County boundary near Crick in Northamptonshire. Train services to and from these facilities are principally provided by DB Schenker (formerly EWS), Freightliner and Direct Rail Services.

It is broadly accepted that freight movements of between 100 and 250 miles or more provide the best opportunity for carriage by rail. This, coupled with heavy loads such as coal, stone and oil, offer the greatest potential for maximising economies of scale. The majority of firms that deal with this type of freight movement, and who are located near or adjacent to an operational railway line in Warwickshire, currently use rail for all or part of their journey.

The greatest potential for new rail freight haulage however, lies with new freight generators such as Prologis Park at Keresley, and the development of further rail connected sites at Hams Hall, Birch Coppice and DIRFT. The proposed Regional Investment Site (RIS) in the Coventry – Nuneaton Regeneration Zone is also likely to be rail connected.

It should be acknowledged however that, given its proximity to the West Midlands conurbation and its location on the rail network, the majority of freight movements in Warwickshire are essentially through the County, and are therefore unlikely to be particularly susceptible to any new rail freight initiatives. The diverse trip length, nature and pattern of local road freight movements generated in the County are also unlikely to be suitable for transfer to rail.

In terms of encouraging road to rail switch for the movement of freight a number of measures could be pursued by the County Council, particularly in relation to the inter-modal terminals at Hams Hall, Birch Coppice and DIRFT. These could include working with the Highways Agency to promote the provision of signing information from the Motorway and Trunk Road Network and the introduction of priority measures on roads leading to and from freight terminals and hubs.

In these circumstances, the County Council sees its main role in promoting the transfer of freight from road to rail as being through the land use planning process, through partnership working with Local Planning Authorities to ensure that appropriate sites are available for development with rail access.

18.3.3 Aviation

There are currently two operational airfields within Warwickshire, at Wellesbourne and Long Marston, neither of which experience any movement of freight. Until recently Coventry Airport (located near Baginton in Warwick District) handled substantial domestic and international cargo traffic movements, which predominantly arrived and departed at night. However, the main airport operator went into receivership at the end of 2009, and a new operator is currently being sought.

18.4 Other Transport Modes

There is currently no known movement of freight on the canal system serving Warwickshire. The canals are primarily used for leisure and recreational purposes.

There are a number of long distance/strategic pipelines in Warwickshire and local pipelines running from supply points to the nearest urban areas.

18.5 Key Challenges

The main difficulties associated with freight distribution in Warwickshire are:

- (i) Warwickshire generates relatively little freight compared to that which passes through the County;
- (ii) Traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours, can have adverse implications for the movement of goods and freight by road;
- (iii) There is a potential conflict between meeting the needs of industry and commerce to transport freight and the resulting environmental and social effects;
- (iv) Reliance on road based freight movements has implications for inappropriate route choice. This results in adverse impacts on rural roads and within residential areas. There are also problems related to lorry parking and theft from high-sided vehicles;
- (iii) There is a need to try and encourage the switch of freight from road to rail. However, nearly all rail freight movements will need a road based movement at either end of the journey, and will impact on the highway network to varying degrees;
- (iv) There is potential conflict between the use of water for the transportation of freight, and the recreational and amenity enjoyment of inland waterways and canals;
- (v) There are significant practical limitations on the use of the canals within the County for the movement of freight; and
- (vi) Opportunities for the widespread use of pipelines for the transportation of freight in the County are limited to certain products and materials.

18.6 The Strategy

18.6.1 Objectives

Within the context of these challenges, the objectives of the Sustainable Freight Distribution Strategy are as follows:

- (i) To achieve an appropriate balance between the need to sustain and support the Sub-Regional and local economy whilst protecting and improving the environment;
- (ii) To encourage operating efficiency and the dissemination of best practice in freight transport; and
- (iii) To encourage integration within and between all freight transport modes.

18.6.2 Policies

The strategy policies to achieve these objectives are described below.

Policy SF1: General movement of freight

The County Council will work with other local authorities in the Region and Sub-Region, the freight industry and organisations such as the Highways Agency and Network Rail to improve the efficiency of freight movements, and to encourage the switch of freight from road to rail.

Policy F1 will be achieved via the following:

- (i) Making targeted improvements to the motorway/trunk road network and key rail corridors;
- (ii) Encouraging the establishment and continued development of local and Regional Freight Quality Partnerships;
- (iii) Exploring the possibility of developing urban area 'consolidation centres' for the transfer of goods from HGVs to smaller vehicles for final distribution; and
- (iv) Seeking the inclusion of sustainable freight distribution in the development of Green Transport Plans for new industrial and commercial development.

Policy SF2: Road freight strategy

The County Council will develop its work with the freight industry through the Warwickshire Freight Quality Partnership (FQP) to recognise the needs of goods vehicles in the management of the highway network (including traffic management, highway improvements, highway maintenance and bridge maintenance and strengthening) and to manage the potential conflict arising between freight movements and possible environmental and social effects.

Through the FQP the County Council aim to:

- (i) Continue to promote the use of the agreed 24 hour lorry route network and, wherever possible to discourage the use of less suitable routes;
- (ii) Ensure that signage directs heavy goods vehicles to industrial estates and town centres via the best routes;
- (iii) Seek to define and enforce delivery times in town centres;
- (iv) Review parking and loading restrictions to identify opportunities to address problems for delivery vehicles, particularly where front-only access exists;
- (v) Ensure that reasonable access for heavy goods vehicles is maintained in connection with measures for their control and restriction;
- (vi) Seek to identify overnight parking facilities for HGVs where a known demand exists;

- (vii) Seek to control heavy goods vehicle movements through or near environmentally sensitive areas (for example, Conservation Areas and residential neighbourhoods); and
- (viii) Seek to introduce more effective enforcement of structural and amenity weight limits;

Policy SF3: Rail freight strategy

The County Council will work in partnership with a number of key partners to help promote, improve access to and expand rail freight facilities where appropriate.

Policy F3 will be delivered via the following:

- (i) Work in partnership with the freight industry, DfT, Highways Agency, Network Rail and other stakeholders to promote the transfer of freight from road to rail;
- (ii) Work in partnership with the Local Planning Authorities to identify and protect selected sites for future rail freight connection;
- (iii) Support access to existing rail freight facilities, and, subject to planning and environmental constraints, their expansion; and
- (iv) Encourage new development that is likely to generate significant freight movements to be located in areas that have good access to the rail network.

Policy SF4: Other modes

The County Council will work in partnership with British Waterways, the Environment Agency and the freight industry to explore the potential to transfer freight from road to water.

The following actions will be undertaken in support of Policy F4.

- (i) The potential for the transfer of freight from road to water, particularly in the context of the impact this may have on their current environmental and leisure usage will be investigated; and
- (ii) The potential to develop inter-modal terminals that include a waterway connection will be investigated.

Policy SF5: Freight handling at Coventry airport

The County Council will continue to support the use and development of freight handling facilities at Coventry Airport (Baginton), subject to appropriate mitigation and environmental protection measures.

Policy SF6: Use of pipelines

The use of pipelines will be encouraged while ensuring minimal environmental impact both during and after installation of the necessary infrastructure.

18.7 The Action Plan

Table SF 1: Action Plan

Policy	Action	Timescale	Links to
SF1 General	Making improvements to the motorway/trunk road network and key rail corridors.	On-going	
	Establishment/development of the Warwickshire Freight Quality Partnership and Regional Freight Quality Partnerships.	On-going	
	Explore the possibility of developing urban area 'consolidation centres'.	Long	
	Inclusion of sustainable freight distribution in the development of Green Transport Plans for new industrial and commercial development.	On-going	Smarter Choices strategy
SF2 Road Freight Strategy	Promotion of the agreed 24 hour lorry route network and, wherever possible to discourage the use of less suitable routes.	On-going	
	Ensure that signage directs heavy goods vehicles to industrial estates and town centres via the best routes.	Short	
	Define and enforce delivery times in town centres.	Short	
	Review parking and loading restrictions to identify opportunities to address problems for delivery vehicles, particularly where front-only access exists.	Short	
	Ensure reasonable access for heavy goods vehicles is maintained in connection with measures for their control and restriction.	On-going	
	Identify overnight parking facilities for HGVs where a known demand exists.	Medium	Parking Strategy
	The control of heavy goods vehicle movements through or near environmentally sensitive areas.	On-going	
	The introduction of more effective enforcement of structural and amenity weight limits.	Short-term	
SF3 Rail Freight Strategy	The promotion of the transfer of freight from road to rail	On-going	
	Identify and protect selected	On-going	

Policy	Action	Timescale	Links to
	sites for future rail freight connection;		
	Support access to existing rail freight facilities, and, subject to planning and environmental constraints, their expansion;	On-going	
	Encouraging new development that is likely to generate significant freight movements to be located in areas that have good access to the rail network.	On-going	Land Use and Transportation Strategy
SF4 Other modes Water	Transfer of freight from road to water, particularly in the context of the impact this may have on their current environmental and leisure usage. Development of inter-modal terminals that include a waterway connection.	On-going On-going	
SF5 Other Modes Air	Support the continued use, and development, of freight handling facilities at Coventry Airport (Baginton).	On-going	
SF6 Other Modes Pipelines	Encouraging the use of pipelines	On-going	

18.8 Targets and Monitoring

National Indicators

There are no National Indicators that are directly relevant to the Sustainable Freight Strategy.

Monitoring the progress of delivery of the items outlined in the Action Plan will be an important part of the management and control process. Progress against the identified actions will be reviewed on a regular basis (at least annually) to make certain that the Action Plan is achieving the desired outcomes.