



BEDFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Bedford's Freight Strategy (2011 – 2021)

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Executive Summary

The transport of freight into Bedford town centre, through and around our Borough and even to our doors helps sustain our economy and our quality of life. With anticipated growth in population and employment opportunities in the borough we can anticipate increased road-based freight movements and increased demands on our road network to accommodate this growth.

Set against this are the environmental disruption and the potential for accident risk resulting from increasing numbers of lorries. A strategy for freight can assist to promote and enable an integrated and sustainable freight distribution system that supports economic growth but which minimises damage to our natural and built environment.

The second Bedfordshire Local Transport Plan, published in March 2006, included a Framework Freight Strategy as an appendix. The intention was that further work would be carried out to produce a Freight Strategy to be used for consultation with all interested sectors of the community. This strategy defines an approach for freight management in Bedford Borough which seeks to reflect the aspirations of all interested parties, and provide guidance for all who have an interest in current and future freight transport.

This Bedford Borough Freight Strategy considers all aspects of freight in the borough:

- It seeks to make freight transport an integral part of transport and development policy
- It considers how freight can be routed and managed to achieve efficiencies for the industry while minimising impact on the environment and residential communities in particular
- It considers funding streams for freight infrastructure, including rest areas and parking for road based freight.
- It gives due consideration to all means of transporting freight

Specific actions are summarised at the end of each chapter and are then consolidated in Appendix A.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 General

1.1.1 Bedford Borough Council will use this freight strategy to shape the management of freight within the authority's area and as a mechanism for engaging neighbouring local authorities to ensure consistency of information across administrative boundaries. The strategy is part of the developing Local Transport 3 Plan and will work alongside other key LTP strategies.

1.1.2 The Nature of Freight

The majority of freight movement within Bedford Borough can be attributed to the legitimate delivery of goods that we want to buy in shops, drink supplies to rural pubs, fresh flowers and plants to farm shops and nurseries and also the transfer and collection of our waste. This activity occurs because we create the demand for it. Very often now freight is delivered 'Just in Time' to make sure that goods are delivered to the right place, at the right time, and at the right cost (The 3 R's). This is particularly true for the food industry where we demand fresh produce and businesses cannot store items in bulk.

1.1.3 Transport and freight is a very competitive market primarily because of the demand that we place on the industry everyday. Freight and logistics companies are constantly seeking to improve their efficiencies to ensure that goods get to their customers on time.

1.1.4 While road and rail freight are highly regulated industries, regulations are aimed at ensuring safety and competition with only limited regard for the impact that freight movement has on infrastructure and communities.

1.1.5 In general it is not in goods vehicle driver's interests to use inappropriate roads. Long distance hauliers will always prefer to use high standard roads where higher more consistent economic speeds are more easily maintained. Drivers in and around Bedford on more local roads similarly have no desire to spend more time than necessary on congested roads that impede their progress.

1.1.6 It is important to recognise that our narrow streets in town and village roads were never originally designed to withstand the passage of 44 tonne articulated lorries and we could similarly never have predicted the effects that changing consumer demand would have on how the business of logistics and distribution is organised to meet our needs. In this context it is important to acknowledge that in order to deliver goods to the final destination drivers will at some point on their journey have to use roads that could be considered as unsuitable.

1.2 Who is the Freight Strategy for?

- 1.2.1 The movement of goods is pivotal to the economic prosperity of our Borough and for this reason the management of freight is an issue that involves and affects many people and organisations that all depend on and contribute to the 'supply chain' in some way.
- 1.2.2 The Freight Strategy will be particularly important to Development Control and land use planning officers at Bedford Borough Council. It is essential that freight generators are located on, or near to the Freight Route Network, and that funding is attracted to enhance the effective and environmentally sustainable passage of freight around and through the Borough.

1.3 Why do we need a freight strategy?

- 1.3.1 The aim of this strategy is to provide a focus for better partnership working with local people and industry itself to:
- Identify and understand the nature and requirements of local freight activity
 - Establish as far as is possible a preferred Freight Route Network (FRN).
 - Agree the most appropriate ways to reduce the negative impacts of freight movement without moving problems elsewhere.

The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a network management duty on Bedford Borough, in particular, part 2 Section 16(1) of the Act states:

"it is the duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives:

- (a) securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network; and,
- (b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority"

A freight strategy is a valuable focus and can provide a steer to all those involved in or affected by freight and to maintain a consistent approach for all freight issues.

1.3.2 Bedford Borough Sustainable Community Strategy

The Sustainable Community Strategy provides the high level aspirations for the Borough of Bedford. The following are of most relevance in the context of this freight strategy:

- A Thriving Borough – Economic Development, Regeneration and Enterprise

Our Goal: A stronger local economy, delivering higher levels of sustainable growth and employment for the benefits of the Borough's existing and future residents.

- A Greener Borough – Environment and Climate Change

Our Goal: A high quality natural and built environment which is valued and enjoyed by all; which encourages biodiversity and supports the development of a low carbon community, including local businesses, capable of adapting to the impacts of climate change.

- A Safer Borough – Safer Communities

Our Goal: A Borough where people live safer lives.

- A Growing Borough – Housing and Transport.

Our Goal: A Borough where the supply and quality of housing and transport is capable of supporting the needs and aspirations of the Borough's population now and in the future.

It is important to acknowledge the role that freight and freight management can play in either directly or indirectly supporting these goals. In the medium to long-term we can expect and need to prepare for increased economic activity and resultant movement of goods around the administrative area to 2021 and beyond. A well designed and flexible Freight Strategy is crucial in taking advantage of this, and allowing for developing economic prosperity while protecting the Borough's natural environment.

2.0 The freight policy context

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 It is important that the Bedford Borough Freight Strategy is set in the planning policy context at national and local level.

2.1.2 The former government's Sustainable Communities Plan (Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future), launched in 2003 aimed to deliver sustainable communities in both urban and rural areas. It focused the attention and attempted to co-ordinate the efforts of all levels of Government and stakeholders in bringing about development that meets the economic, social and environmental needs of future generations. The Sustainable Communities Plan led to the development of four Growth Areas. One of these was Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM), containing Bedford Borough, which adopted the Sub Regional Strategy in March 2005. Freight is identified as one of the sub region's growth sectors which has implications for land use and transport planning in the sub areas as increasing demand is likely to be placed on the networks.

2.1.3 Future of Transport: A Network for 2030.

The national policy context for freight is set out in the White Paper 'Future of Transport: A Network for 2030' (July 2004). This document recognises the importance of freight transport to the economy and prosperity of the country and also the need for goods to be moved freely, reliably and efficiently.

The document sets out the former government's key aims for the freight industry, which are to facilitate the continuing development of a competitive and efficient freight sector, whilst reducing the impact that moving freight has on congestion and the environment. It is expected that the present coalition government will not differ greatly from these overall aims.

2.1.4 Sustainable Distribution: A Strategy

This document was published in 1999 as a daughter document to the 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport' – it still provides the most current overall government guidance on sustainable distribution. The strategy sets the following objectives in relation to distribution:

- Reduce the number of accidents, injuries and cases of ill-health associated with freight movement
- Minimise congestion
- Make better use of transport infrastructure
- Minimise pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Improve the efficiency of distribution

- Manage development pressures on the landscape – both natural and man-made
- Reduce the noise and disturbance from freight movements

2.1.5 Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DASTS)

Delivering a Sustainable Transport System is the national transport strategy applicable at policy level across international networks, national networks, cities and regional networks. The strategy is underpinned by five goals:

- Supporting national economic competitiveness and growth through reliable and efficient transport networks;
- Reducing transport's emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases;
- Contributing to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy;
- Promoting greater equality of opportunity for all citizens: and
- Improving quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and promoting a healthy natural environment.

2.1.6 DaSTS: The Logistics Perspective

The logistics perspective is a supplementary paper produced by the Department for Transport (DfT) which acknowledges specific policies for the freight and logistics sector.

The document sets out specific issues and priorities under each of the five main DaSTS goals from a freight perspective, but there are nine particular commitments made that have strategic significance, those of particular local interest are:

1. DfT wants to better understand the origins and destinations of the main freight flows in the country so as to inform its priorities and policies, especially in the development of National Planning Statements
2. A clear but unspecified commitment is made to ensure that the freight sector takes responsibility for achieving its share of carbon dioxide reductions
3. An unequivocal commitment is made that the needs and impacts of freight and logistics will be prominent decisions on priorities for national and international networks beyond 2014, the commencement of the next planning and spending cycle
4. DfT wants to develop a national reliability indicator for freight

services on national networks

5. The threat of increased penetration of the UK road transport market by foreign hauliers resulting from a relaxation of cabotage rules is explicitly acknowledged and the achievement of a good outcome from the negotiations currently underway in Brussels is a high priority
6. DfT is committed to better understanding the role and the dynamics of the use of vans in the economy, given their dramatic growth and contribution to emissions
7. DfT also wants to improve opportunities for modal transfer by working with companies or organisations that can facilitate such changes

Wherever possible Bedford Borough Council seeks to play an active part in developing its own local knowledge to support wider national work.

2.1.7 Planning Policy Guidance 13 (PPG 13)

PPG 13 provides local authorities with planning policy guidance on transport.

The objectives of the guidance are to integrate planning and transport at national, regional, strategic and local levels to:

- Promote more sustainable transport choices both for people and moving freight
- Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling
- Reduce the need to travel, especially by car

PPG 13 encourages local authorities, freight operators, businesses and developers to work together within the context of freight quality partnerships (FQP) in order to agree on such issues as:

- Lorry routes
- Loading and unloading facilities
- Reducing vehicle delivery noise levels
- Enabling a more efficient and sustainable approach to deliveries in sensitive locations.

2.1.8 Regional collaboration on freight policies

Bedford and other neighbouring authorities fall within a 3-4 hour radius of the key strategic seaports within the region. Working time directives limit driver hours for safety reasons and it is necessary then for them to rest. While it is important for us to focus on and deal with local freight related issues it is also important for us to recognise the potential wider need, use and benefit of Bedford based freight infrastructure.

Bedford Borough Council has been an active partner in the East of England Freight Quality Partnership. The group provides an opportunity to work directly with neighbouring authorities to ensure cross boundary consistency where necessary.

2.1.9 Developing local freight policies – Local Development Framework (LDF) and Local Transport Plan (LTP)

The planning framework at a local level is set by the Bedford Development Framework. This consists of local development documents (LDDs) which are formed by development plan documents (DPDs), supplementary planning documents (SPDs) and a statement of community involvement (SCI). These provide strategic policies and proposals for development. The Allocations and Designations Plan DPD will establish the amount of development (housing provision, business and industrial land provision) and the broad distribution of development (e.g. settlement hierarchy and strategic locations for development - which include key development principles for specific sites. The Development Management Policies DPD will include policies relating to more specific issues such as Rail Freight Links and Commercial Vehicle Parking. However the Allocations and Designations plan does not deal with the allocation of mineral and waste sites which are specifically dealt with in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.

2.1.10 Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan

The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan sets out the long-term vision for the borough, spatial objectives and the spatial policies needed to deliver the vision. The Plan focuses most development in the Bedford Growth Area, which comprises Bedford, Kempston and the northern Marston Vale. The remaining part of the borough is the Rural Policy Area.

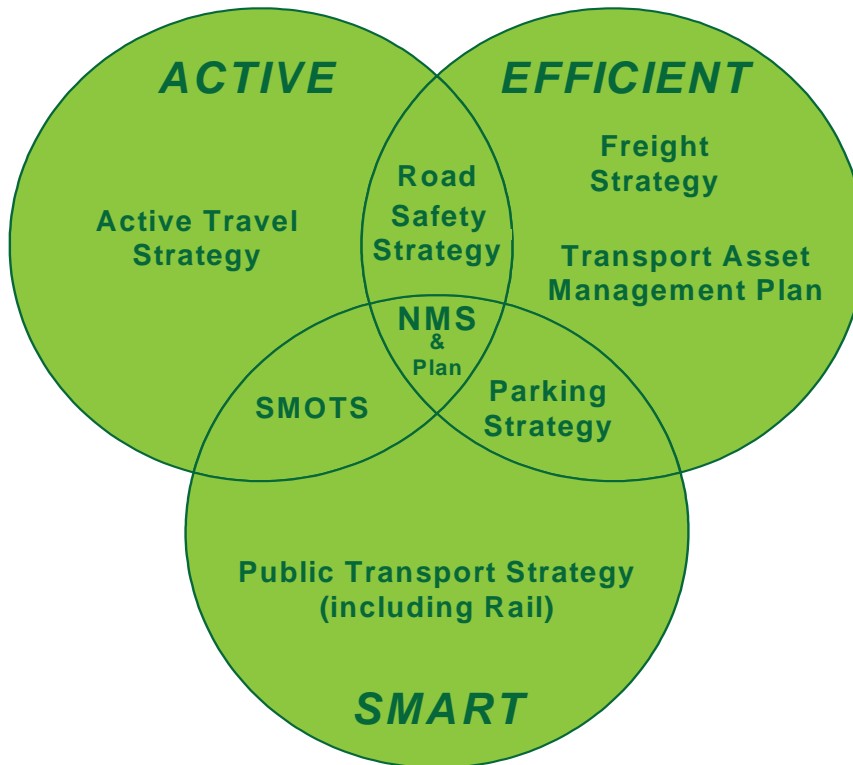
The impact of freight is not fully considered within either the planning or transport legislative frameworks. Therefore, this strategy aims to guide this authority in ensuring that freight management is consistent with wider aspirations for the long term development of the Borough.

2.1.11 The LTP Philosophy sets out the transport aims and ambitions of a local authority and identifies the key projects, schemes and initiatives necessary to deliver the outcomes which will build sustainable local communities, and

strengthen its place shaping role. LTPs are statutory plans required by the Transport Act 2008.

The LTP philosophy

We want to influence travel behaviour to facilitate these principles and propose a **three themed** solution to tackle this using 8 tools (strategies), which overlap each other as illustrated in the diagram below.



NMS = Network Management Strategy

SMOTS = Sustainable Modes of Transport to School Strategy
(An accessibility audit will be carried out on all the strategies.)

The philosophy behind this approach is that a sustainable transport system represents a balance between people and the network. The capacity of the road network is limited; we need to redistribute trips across all modes and provide the infrastructure and information for these choices to be made. If the emphasis is too heavily weighted on the network, people will be discouraged from using sustainable modes of transport and we will fail to influence travel behaviour. However, we are conscious of the needs of business and service providers to be and travel to where they are needed.

2.2 Freight Policy development

2.2.1 Bedford Borough is likely to grow and change over time. It will be important for the freight strategy to be flexible enough to move with these changes and continue to provide relevant guidance. Case studies have been published by the Department of Transport in its Freight Best Practice document Local

Authority Freight Management Guide on which this strategy has in part been based. The aim is to develop a knowledge bank with partners to help further our understanding of local freight activity in key areas such as construction travel plans, lorry routeing, lorry rest facilities and reducing the environmental impacts of distribution.

2.3 Securing Resources for Freight

2.3.1 Freight activity within Bedford Borough is considerable and makes substantial contributions to the economy, both directly and indirectly. The following information has been drawn from the Steer Davies Gleave report: Bedfordshire Local Transport Plan – Framework freight strategy February 2006 and is the only strategic evidence base available at the time of writing this strategy. Action 3.1 will focus on creating an up to date Bedford Borough evidence for freight activity.

Road Freight Volumes and Patterns (Countywide, 2004)

- In 2004, 8,443,360 tonnes of road freight originating outside the county was delivered to locations in Bedfordshire, 8,671,770 tonnes of freight lifted in Bedfordshire was delivered by road to destinations outside of the county, and 7,105,740 tonnes of freight moved by road was both for an origin and destination within Bedfordshire.
- Approximately one third of all goods moved to/from the county have an origin or destination in a neighbouring authority area. The flows associated with Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire are particularly prevalent, thus underlining the importance of the M1 and A1 corridors, as well as the A421.
- The freight lifted (in tonnes) to/from Bedfordshire are principally miscellaneous articles, sand, gravel and clay, other crude minerals, machinery and transport equipment, and other manufactured goods.

Commodity	Road freight from/out of Bedfordshire (%)	Road freight to /into Bedfordshire (%)
Miscellaneous articles	27	30
Sand, gravel and clay	13	10
Other crude materials	10	12
Machinery and transport equipment	10	9
Other building products	9	5
Miscellaneous manufacture	8	8

Road Freight Traffic

- In 2004, traffic (as an annual average daily flow value) along the M1 corridor within Bedfordshire was made up of 17% of HGV and 11% of LGV.

- In 2004, over a 12-hour period of observation traffic along some of the major roads within Bedfordshire included 8% (on the A428) to 15.5% (on the A421 westbound) of HGV and 10% (on the A5 southbound) to 15% (on the A5 northbound) of LGV.

With reduced public funding expected to be available in the short-term, it will be necessary to look beyond traditional LTP funding. There will be a need to explore other opportunities available to support the delivery of freight infrastructure and in particular a strengthening of links with business on which there may be a greater reliance to help fund specific freight infrastructure such as lorry parking facilities for example.

ACTION 2.1: Carry out a focused review of wider Bedford Borough Planning and Minerals and Waste policies in relation to freight.

3.0 Understanding Freight in Bedford Borough

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 There is limited published data on freight activity in Bedford Borough although this will be addressed through this strategy. Making decisions with inadequate information can mean that policies and planned actions may not meet their intended objectives and in the worst case could prove to be counterproductive or have negative impacts elsewhere.

Understanding where and why the majority of freight movements are occurring, within and to / from Bedford Borough, is vital for the development of a Freight Strategy. It is also perhaps useful to understand what freight vehicles are and the variety of types that use our roads.

The management of freight will be based on a general distinction between lorries as follows based on the primary gross axle weight limit distinctions:

- Vehicles over 7.5 tonnes – vehicles must display red and yellow rear reflective markings)
- Vehicles over 18 tonnes (up to a maximum of 44 tonnes) – these will have a minimum of 3 axles.

However freight does not just include large goods vehicles; certain retail industries make considerable use of smaller vehicles under 3.5 tonnes to make local delivery trips.

Developing a more detailed understanding helps us not only appreciate some of the challenges facing the industry but also how we can work together to establish measures to regulate and enhance freight movements across the borough without incurring unintended consequences.

3.2 Analysing Freight Movements

- 3.2.1 With our partners we wish to develop a sound understanding of local freight activity and use this to make informed decisions that can be backed up with evidence,. The known relevant existing and potential data sets which have informed the development of this strategy are shown below:

- Existing Weight Restrictions, Weak Bridges and Existing HGV Signed Routes
- Traffic monitoring data sets (classified traffic counts and journey time data)
- Accident Data
- Safer Routes to School Schemes
- Local Workplace Travel Plans *within* the Logistics and Freight Sector

- Complaints or feedback from residents and businesses
- Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)
- Highways Agency Data Sets

3.2.2 The freight route plan in Appendix C shows the main strategic road network which forms the basis of the freight network. Also presented are freight attractors and generators in Bedford Borough and existing height and weight restrictions.

3.3 The Benefits of Freight and the Supply Chain Industry to Bedford Borough

3.3.1 A successful freight industry is vital in underpinning the economic development of any area, which in turn then creates more job opportunities within the freight industry itself. The freight industry currently supports approximately 5,400 jobs in the town. These are in the town's major manufacturing, wholesale, warehousing and retail sections of the town's employers. To understand the performance of the freight industry in Bedford Borough, an action can be undertaken to continue to collect data about local job creation and economic development.

In 2009, clearly identifiable freight and distribution operations accounted for around 11.0% of jobs in the Borough, made up as follows:

Freight transport and storage	5,200 jobs, 6.4%
Wholesale	3,700 jobs, 4.6%
Total jobs	8,900 jobs, 11.0%

Sizeable as these figures are, they exclude the significant Distribution operations which are 'hidden' within other major sectors, e.g. the logistics operations of retailers (Sainsbury, ASDA, Argos etc) and of manufacturers.

Also, the freight sector is expected to grow over the life of the LTP, and allocations of employment land for distribution uses have recently been proposed in the Draft Allocations and Designations Plan of the Local Development Framework.

3.4 The Costs and environmental impacts of Freight to Bedford Borough

3.4.1 The impacts and costs that freight movement can have on the logistics industry, urban and rural road networks and communities include:

- HGV impact, in terms of noise, visual intrusion, operating hours and carbon footprint
- Highways asset and capacity management and deterioration

- Road safety impact of freight transport
- Community severance
- Delay to deliveries and increased fuel costs

ACTION 3.1: Consolidate the evidence base into a comprehensive freight monitoring system.

4.0 Strategy Development and Monitoring

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Having set out the local and national transport strategies and priorities within which the Freight Strategy is set, an approach to the enhancement and regulation of freight transport in Bedford Borough can be formulated.

4.1.2 The freight strategy action plan is based on the following key areas of work, which are discussed in subsequent chapters: -

- Communication with industry to understand specific issues relating to deliveries and loading arrangements
- Consolidating and enhancing existing freight related data sets
- Auditing of all existing freight infrastructure
- Measures to accommodate planned growth

4.2 Effective Monitoring

4.2.1 Effective monitoring of freight traffic movements can provide a better understanding of road freight activity in Bedford Borough and will feed into other Council strategies and planning documents. Bedford Borough Council already collects traffic count data on a rolling programme which is broken down into vehicle categories. If traffic flow data is linked to land use information, this should give a more thorough local picture of how freight operates in Bedford Borough. This will then feed into the Network Management Strategy enabling Bedford Borough to use the resources for road maintenance more effectively. It would also give a better understanding of the impact of new and proposed development on the wider road network.

4.2.2 It is important that the Freight Strategy is monitored by setting up systems to collect data from regional and local partners and associations. Monitoring of the outputs of the Strategy will be carried out by assessing the progress of actions listed within the document and the results will be reported in LTP review documents. The Freight Strategy will be monitored to make sure the Action Plan is being progressed and to inform partners of what still needs to be done.

4.2.3 Bedford Borough is keen to work with local communities and local industry to understand the difficulties related to freight movements and to collaborate in specific initiatives involving all interested parties to help resolve them.

ACTION 4.1: To ensure that freight delivery routeing, controls and infrastructure are considered as an integral part of planning proposals for Bedford Borough.

5.0 Effective Deliveries

5.1 Effective Deliveries in Urban Areas

Use of Urban Access Restrictions

5.1.1 Suppliers, delivery drivers and their customers wish to be as efficient as possible by arriving within delivery windows to avoid unnecessary delays due to congestion and then to leave the town having finished their business. First and foremost the focus will be to work with businesses in the town centre to jointly take responsibility for providing good directional information to delivery drivers. This information can be in the form of appropriate directions to stores provided to drivers by the store themselves or the transport manager responsible for the delivery.

There are added benefits to good directional information. These include reduced mileage and therefore fuel use, reduced anxiety on the part of drivers and the reduction of road risk if drivers are forced to turn around in the road to re-trace their steps.

5.1.2 Urban access restrictions can take the form of specific lorry routes or lorry bans at certain times but Bedford Borough wishes to take a collaborative approach with environmental health, safety professionals, businesses and operators to provide good information on agreed preferred routes. The restriction of lorries using certain urban areas is an effective way to combat noise, nuisance and local air quality problems affecting urban communities. Lorry bans can also help to prevent damage to urban infrastructure such as road surfaces or verges and reduce congestion and accidents.

5.1.3 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 gave local authorities wide-ranging powers to regulate traffic. This act empowers local authorities to enforce bans to restrict lorries to designated areas in which the impact of lorries is deemed to be too great upon the local environment, communities and infrastructure. Lorry bans can be enforced by signing, Traffic Regulation Orders and physical means. They can either be in individual streets, or throughout a defined area, with exemptions where access for loading and unloading is required.

5.1.4 Increasingly, restrictions such as night time lorry bans are being imposed upon deliveries at certain times of the day in urban areas that are sensitive to freight operations. Restrictions of this kind should be considered carefully and on a case by case basis, as the impact of delivery activity is dependent upon land use composition and typical temporal activity of an area. Currently there are time related freight delivery restrictions in Harpur Street in central Bedford.

5.1.5 *Freight in Bedford Town Centre*

The centre of Bedford is currently subject to a variety of planning proposals. These include Bedford Centre West, riverside developments, the Station Quarter and the future of the High Street. Routeing and controls for the

delivery of freight into and through these areas must form an integral part of the planning proposals for the town centre.

5.1.6 *Parking Management*

Provision of good quality loading facilities with high quality parking areas can reduce the time taken to unload goods, reduce congestion from poorly parked or illegally parked vehicles, and allow for safer delivery activities. Bedford Borough Council is keen to work with local businesses and will respond to specific requests or ideas where improvements to kerbside loading or overnight parking facilities may be useful.

5.1.7 *Out of Town Lorry Parks*

Restrictions on drivers' working hours for vehicles over 3.5 tonnes and the lack of places to stop and rest mean that rest facilities close to towns are important in aiding safe and efficient freight movements. The need to review lorry parks and rest facilities within the borough is covered in more detail in Chapter 7. Provision of lorry parks could be related to development contribution via planning agreements.

In the context of national legal restrictions on driver's hours, Bedford Borough recognises the potential role it and other authorities may need to play in helping to facilitate the development of freight infrastructure that provides rest facilities for long-haul freight movements which arrive at ports in the South East of England.

Attendees in both workshops, industry and local communities agreed with the principle of providing secure and designated lorry parking facilities within Bedford Borough, to cater for through / long-distance lorry movements. Two of the groups proposed the idea of making use of Park and Ride infrastructure to cater for lorry parking.

5.1.8 *Consolidation Centres*

Consolidation Centres in other locations have been successful in reducing freight vehicle movements within urban areas. This concept entails goods vehicles entering warehouse facilities in an area out of town filled with goods either predominantly or exclusively for that location, rather than goods destined for other locations or even empty space. At a later date the goods are delivered by a central logistics provider to a number of outlets or sites in a similar area on the same trip, usually in smaller vehicles.

Feedback from the initial freight strategy development workshop held in January 2010 suggested that a consolidation centre may not necessarily be appropriate. The early and co-ordinated involvement of local businesses will be essential to ascertain the feasibility of this measure and Bedford Borough is keen to work with any external provider to review and assess any specific proposals within the Borough.

5.2 Serving a Rural Population

5.2.1 Much of Bedford Borough is rural in nature. Freight activity in rural areas is diverse and consists of farm related movements, goods vehicles which are destined for small towns and villages to stock local shops and also businesses which have been established on farms as part of rural diversification and which contribute to the local economy. However there is anecdotal evidence from residents relating to 'rat-running lorries with no business in the areas. Where drivers deviate from the preferred freight network local communities can suffer the costs, without any related benefit.

5.2.2 The population of Bedford Borough rose by 7,580 between 2001 and 2008, an increase of just under 1,000 per year. It is forecast to increase at a slightly higher rate of 1,200 per year between 2008 and 2013 to 162,700 in 2013.

Most of this increase (72% in 2001-08 and 74% in 2008-13) is in the rural area, primarily in parishes fringing the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston.

5.2.3 The scale of freight activity on the rural Bedford Borough road network is not fully quantified at this stage. However there is initial evidence of unnecessary 'through' freight movements in specific areas within the Borough which was provided by town and parish council representatives at the freight strategy consultation workshop. Overnight lay-by parking locations were also collected for further investigation.

Prior to this strategy being developed specific complaints and concerns related to freight have been considered via the highways helpdesk and reviewed on their own merits. Early indications are that freight concerns are focused in specific areas rather than being widespread throughout the borough area. From this point on all specific freight related concerns or requests will be considered against the new freight strategy.

Locations of designated operating centres within the Borough area are not yet mapped but a specific action to acquire and map this information with the assistance of the Vehicle Operating Standards Agency will be taken.

The freight network plan presented in Appendix C shows key local freight origins and destinations which were identified during the town and parish council workshop event.

5.2.4 It will be necessary to determine which of the roads in rural areas not on the Freight Route Network are the most appropriate for freight vehicles to access operating centres and local industry. However where the passage of freight on certain roads is not deemed to be essential, we will work with communities and operators in the first instance to encourage use of other more appropriate routes. While traffic regulation orders can be used to restrict access for vehicles over 7.5 tonnes in weight from individual roads or from defined areas, enforcement can be complicated and resource intensive. Key relationships

with Bedfordshire Police and operators themselves will be essential in making any such restrictions truly effective.

ACTION 5.1: Mapping of operating centres in collaboration with the Vehicle Operator Licensing Agency (VOSA)

6.0 Routeing Management

6.1 Development of a Vehicle Routeing Network

6.1.1 Generally lorry traffic within Bedford Borough falls into two specific types:

- Lorry traffic which seeks to travel through Bedford Borough
- Lorry traffic which originates from and / or has a destination within Bedford Borough

The primary purpose of identifying a Freight Routeing Network (FRN) is to provide clear information necessary for freight operators to aid them in their decision making and as a result to safeguard communities by keeping lorries on the most appropriate routes wherever possible.

Table 1 below shows the current carriageway hierarchy classification used as the basis for determining maintenance priorities. With review, we consider that this hierarchy could be used to determine freight and other network priorities.

Bedford Borough's existing carriageway hierarchy has initially been used as the basis for determining which roads should comprise the higher level primary roads within the freight route network. Roads with lower classification such as 'B' roads would initially form the secondary freight route network. The initial suggestion for the authority's FRN is shown in Appendix C.

Freight trips and the network of roads that drivers currently use to deliver are dependent on the specific location of their destinations relative to where they start their trips. As drivers get closer to their intended destination they are forced to use lower class roads in the hierarchy.

The existing road network has been divided into 2 specific categories of road which make up the currently defined Freight Route Network (FRN). These are:

Primary freight routes- these roads are the trunk and 'A' roads which would ideally be used for freight traffic moving through Bedford Borough. It is important to recognise that roads that pass through the town centre will also serve a local access function for legitimate deliveries.

Secondary freight routes – these roads are required to 'fill-in' specific geographic gaps between 'A' roads fulfilling a primary freight route function.

This classification includes some 'A' roads and 'B' roads where there is evidence of their importance for local freight movement.

In addition, and in order to get goods to their final destination local access routes which diverge from the primary and secondary network are required by drivers.

Local access freight routes - Further discussion about the usefulness and viability of a defined local access route network is required. Initial feedback from communities involved in freight related scheme consultations tends to indicate a view that spreading freight movements across an area is preferable to focusing activity on specific roads.

The further development and promotion of the FRN will involve the following general process and will be done in consultation with all stakeholders, including vehicle operators, residents and communities:

- Establish the primary trunk road and local strategic road network to comprise FRN based as far as possible on the existing network hierarchy. (see appendix C)
- Review physical network restrictions (e.g. low or weak bridges), very tight bends on any specified parts of the FRN and consider alternative routes.
- Make the local recommended network widely available and communicate proposed freight network and engage industry in "Responsible Haulier" type scheme.
- Monitor divergence from use of the agreed network in collaboration with local communities and industry through pilot Lorry Watch initiatives and with bans and subsequent enforcement considered as a secondary measure
- Carry out targeted enforcement in partnership with the Police/Trading Standards and industry

Table 1: Bedford Borough Carriageway Hierarchy and FRN equivalent

Category	Hierarchy Description	Type of Road General Description	Detailed Description	Freight Route Network Classification
1	Motorway	Limited access motorway regulations apply	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic. Fully grade separated and restrictions on use.	Roads for through freight traffic
2	Strategic Route	Trunk and some Principal "A" roads between Primary destinations	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic with little frontage access or pedestrian traffic. Speed limits are usually in excess of 40mph and there are few junctions. Pedestrian crossings are either segregated or controlled and parked vehicles are generally prohibited	Primary FRN Roads for through freight traffic, which also perform a local access function in town centres <i>"Trunk Roads and Primary Distributor "A" roads.</i>
3a	Main Distributor	Major Urban Network and Inter-Primary Links. Short – medium distance	Routes between Strategic Routes and linking urban centres to the strategic network with limited frontage access. In urban areas speed limits are usually 40mph or less. Parking is restricted at peak times and there are positive measures for pedestrian safety	Primary/Secondary FRN Roads for through freight traffic, which also perform a local access function in town centres <i>"Borough Distributor"</i>
3b	Secondary Distributor	Classified Road (B and C class) and unclassified urban bus routes carrying local traffic with frontage access and frequent junctions	In rural areas these roads link the larger villages and HGV generators to the Strategic and Main Distributor Network. In built up areas these roads have 30mph speed limits and very high levels of pedestrian activity with some crossing facilities including zebra crossings. On street parking is generally unrestricted except for safety reasons.	Secondary FRN <i>"Local Distributor"</i>
4a	Link Road	Roads linking between the Main and Secondary Distributor Network with frontage access and frequent junctions	In rural areas these roads link smaller villages to the distributor roads. They vary in width and are not always capable of carrying two way traffic. In urban areas they are residential or industrial inter-connecting roads with 30mph speed limits random pedestrian movements and uncontrolled parking	Secondary FRN <i>"Local Distributor"</i>
4b	Local Access Road	Roads serving limited numbers of properties carrying only access traffic	In rural areas these roads serve small settlements, providing access to individual properties/land. They are often only single lane width and unsuitable for HGV. In urban areas they are often residential loop roads or no through roads.	<i>Access road to premises</i>

- Consider lorry restrictions where reported abuse of the non-FRN network is observed and where measures would not create problems elsewhere.
- Where appropriate, identify mitigation measures to manage activity on FRN routes passing through communities and non-FRN routes that provide essential loading and delivery access to property and business.

NB Mitigation on routes may involve speed management, traffic calming and or air quality monitoring to safeguard communities and other vulnerable road users where financial resources are available.

6.1.2 Route Assessment Criteria

It is important to recognise and accept that it will be necessary for lorries to use roads that are not on the FRN in order to deliver to and access the town centre services, local shops and residential property and this is equally applicable in rural areas.

There may be specific locations which generate significant lorry movements on a number of local roads. In these cases and if it is feasible it may be advantageous to carry out an assessment to determine the most appropriate access route. This process will be undertaken with industry and local communities. In the first instance Bedford Borough will ask the businesses to actively promote the agreed route and consider contributing to specific additional highway signage if required. (Appendix B provides details of the proposed methodology)

6.1.3 Communicating the Routes

It will be necessary to communicate Bedford Borough's FRN to the wider haulage industry, neighbouring authorities and other interested parties once this has been decided and any appropriate measures introduced.

Close working with national freight organisations such as the Freight Transport Association, The Road Haulage Association, Vehicle Operating Standards Agency and the Traffic Commissioner will also be required. Through these organisations it is possible to contact groups of operators.

A variety of media is available to do this and may include specific town centre access maps available in hard copy and online. Ideally, it will be possible to distribute these through retailers and other businesses based in the town centre who take deliveries. Refer to section 6.2 for further details.

6.1.6 Monitoring the Routes

A monitoring methodology will need to be developed particularly as over time, new haulage companies will be established, existing ones either close down or relocate and customers do the same. In addition, settlements in Bedford Borough will change and expand, thereby generating more freight demand.

An action should be undertaken to monitor new developments and existing routes to ensure that the right routes are used and the adverse community impacts of freight are managed.

6.1.7 Lorry Watch

Feedback from the consultation workshop held in January 2010 showed considerable support for the development of a “lorry watch” initiative. This will ideally be done collaboratively through Parish Councils and local haulage and freight companies in a joint effort to reinforce the FRN and agreed routes and to provide transport managers and other enforcing agencies with useful information on suspected infringements of goods vehicle restrictions. The Borough Council will provide guidance to such groups on what information to collect.

6.2 Promoting and Managing the Network

6.2.1 Positive Route Signing

The Bedford Borough freight strategy development is based on the notion of properly agreeing and positively promoting the freight route network, which takes account of specific highway features such as low or weak bridges with restrictions to avoid bridge strikes or collapse or undue degradation of the carriageway.

Consideration will only be given to the use of amenity weight restrictions in relation to confirmed community concern if it is clear that positive signage has been unsuccessful. The initial intention would be to consider ‘lorry watch’ for a period of time with a view to making direct contact with offending operators where there is good evidence of inappropriate road use by drivers.

Due to cost and increased street clutter and potentially regular enforcement, it is important to stress that amenity weight restrictions will not necessarily be automatically applied to every road that is not on the identified FRN

Criteria for consideration of amenity weight restrictions are presented as Appendix D to this strategy:

A review of both existing and proposed lorry bans and route signing in Bedford Borough will be undertaken as part of the strategy development. There may be scope to combine existing separate bans and in doing so add and remove areas. This would be a more consistent way of introducing orders to enforce the bans.

6.2.2 The Use of Intelligent Transport Systems

Telematics is the use of sophisticated technology to transmit information to and from a vehicle, to enhance its performance and monitor its location. A whole range of satellite navigation, vehicle tracking, data and voice

communication products and applications are available. Consultation between Bedford Borough Council, the DfT, manufacturers, motoring groups, adjacent authorities and safety organisations can identify the best way to prohibit traffic travelling along unsuitable roads, wherever possible. Direct communication with local industry will help the Council understand how local hauliers manage their routing and where problems related to inconsistent information may exist.

6.2.3 Road Safety Priorities

Road safety and casualty prevention and reduction are of considerable importance to Bedford Borough Council. Investment will be made in road safety, particularly where there are existing identified crash problems.

Crashes are constantly monitored and if there is evidence of unusual or increasing trends involving freight then further investigation will be undertaken and considered in the wider context of our road safety strategy.

In Bedford Borough during the 5 years between 2004 and 2008 there were 2182 injury crashes. Goods vehicles above and below 3.5 tonnes were involved collectively in less than 2.7% of crashes on our network. Broken down this represents 1.1% or 25 crashes for goods vehicles below 3.5 tonnes and 1.6% or 36 crashes for goods vehicles above 3.5 tonnes.

Total crashes 2004 – 2008	Number of crashes	Percentage of crashes
2182		
Goods Vehicles below 3.5 tonnes	25 15 of these on FRN	1.1
Goods vehicles above 3.5 tonnes	36 8 of these on the FRN	1.6
Total	63	2.7

There was only a single crash involving a vulnerable road user in connection with a goods vehicle less than 3.5 tonnes, which involved a horse rider.

Similarly, there was only a single crash involving a vulnerable road user in connection with a goods vehicle over 3.5 tonnes, which involved a pedestrian.

When large freight vehicles are involved in crashes their size and weight can mean that the crashes are more severe than those involving cars alone. However despite overall increasing traffic levels in Bedford Borough over recent

years crashes involving goods vehicles show a decreasing trend and clearly overall numbers are low.

Bedford Borough is keen to work alongside all local hauliers and business to promote road safety initiatives.

6.2.4 Considering authority-wide Works

The freight strategy will be important in the context of our obligations under the network management duty. It will therefore be essential to ensure that freight actions are considered in the wider context of the overall local transport plan programme to ensure that issues are not simply displaced from one area to another. The effects of these on neighbouring authorities will be critical in decision making.

6.2.5 Making the most of Existing Capacity

Opportunities for constructing new roads are limited, so maximum use needs to be made of existing capacity. Through development control, every opportunity will be made to fund new or improvements to existing schemes which will take account of HGV movements and minimise their impact.

ACTION 6.1: To promote and implement the Freight Route Network

ACTION 6.2: To explore opportunities to supply highways related freight infrastructure information to mapping companies for use in satellite navigation software

ACTION 6.3: To assess the potential role of logistics industry telematics systems and satellite navigation software in the development of the operational highway management aspects of this strategy.

ACTION 6.4: To produce town centre and key freight generator access maps

7.0 Providing Vehicle and Rest Facilities

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 In implementing the Bedford Borough Freight Strategy, the aim is to support the requirements of legislation, ensuring that parking of vehicles during rest periods takes place at appropriate, safe locations. This will assist compliance with the Working Time Directive and will support the Council's corporate objectives, including the LTP. Ongoing dialogue with the industry will be important to engage with operators to gain further understanding of the impact that the Working Time Directive is having on operations.

The planning framework (see 2.1.9) is the mechanism through which vehicle parking and rest facilities can be provided.

7.2 Location

7.2.1 Control of most parking and rest facilities is within the remit of Bedford Borough Council, although no purpose built facilities exist in the Borough at present. Attendees in both workshops, industry and local communities agreed with the principle of providing secure and designated lorry parking facilities within Bedford Borough, to cater for through / long-distance lorry movements. Two of the groups proposed the idea of making use of Park and Ride infrastructure to cater for lorry parking. Such facilities will be dependent on private industry investment in most cases.

7.2.2 National Lorry Parking Study

Bedford Borough Council has responded formally to a request from consultants working for the Department for Transport in relation to anecdotal evidence of overnight parking locations in the Borough. The town and parish council workshop feedback provided evidence of this to the DfT. This study aims to obtain a wider picture of parking need in order to assist the DfT in the development of their National Lorry Parking Strategy.

Driver rest facilities and lorry parking often provide essential services to the freight industry and its drivers, notably those who operate long-distance and outside the immediate area.

The provision of safe and secure parking for lorry drivers, which enable easy access from and to the FRN, is preferable to the ad-hoc use of lay-bys or informal use of industrial estate roads which are without sanitation and can lead to disturbance through noise from refrigeration units. Specifically located and designed lorry parking facilities should ideally provide drivers with food and rest facilities.

7.3 Consultation

- 7.3.1 Whilst there has been a period of formal consultation on the whole Freight Strategy, the provision of services for driver's rest periods (both statutory and

non-statutory) is a fundamental issue that requires specific consideration and consultation. While the local authority can assist with consideration of land allocation for such uses, it will rely on private industry investors to come forward with funding, design and operation proposals.

7.4 Deliverability

7.4.1 In delivering the provision of formal driver rest facilities, either for new traffic or to encourage and accommodate shift from informal sites, it is important to consider five key factors:

- Geographical area; must be located to satisfy demand.
- Site location; safe access, secure areas.
- What facilities are required in the rest area.
- Operational issues and site management.
- How the development of particular sites may be constrained by land use planning policy and how these developments support land use.

7.4.2 Whilst the Highways Act 1980 allows for Highway Authorities to develop rest and toilet facilities, modern freight operations to new European standards require more than a car park and toilet block and so commercial sector investment will be imperative for high quality provision.

7.5 Funding Sources

7.5.1 Funding sources exist in both the public and private sector. The public sector has a range of traditional and emerging sources of funding to draw on; including:

- Local Transport Plan financial settlements;
- Major Scheme Bids;
- Revenue Budgets;
- Growth Area Funding (subject to Central Government funding review);
- Developer funding through Section 106 agreements

7.5.2 The private sector can offer funding, both through actual cash expenditure or contributions in kind, for example:

- Section 278 Contributions;
- Section 38 Works;
- Fleet Investment; and
- Infrastructure provision

ACTION 7.1: Explore the need and potential for a Bedford Borough based overnight lorry parking facility.

8.0 Fleet Management

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Like many areas of industry, much consolidation has taken place in the road haulage industry and some small firms have gone out of business, particularly as the operational costs have risen across the industry. Therefore where there are large fleets, it is important to engage the owners in partnership working and in the promotion and development of the strategy.

8.2 Current Fleet Composition of Key Bedford Borough Firms

8.2.1 Current fleet composition data and trip information of the vehicles operated by key Bedford Borough firms will give a greater understanding of general freight activity in the Borough.

8.3 Environmental Management

8.3.1 Advice and Grants

The Department for Transport's 'Local Authority Freight Management Guide'⁽¹⁾ provides comprehensive advice for the development of fleet related freight policies. The guide provides information to assist the understanding of the nature of freight, leading to the production of high quality and deliverable freight strategies and action plans'.

8.3.2 Likely Change to Higher EU Vehicles Standards

EU directives will continue to reduce the environmental impact of the freight and logistics sector. At present Euro IV standards are already in force, and for heavy duty engines used in HGVs, a further round of standards (Euro V) was introduced in October 2008. In order to meet new standards, vehicle manufactures have to introduce new or improved technologies.

8.3.3 Use of New Technologies

The availability of new technologies provides fleet managers with the option to lessen the environmental footprint, whilst also reducing the running costs of their fleets. Conversion to use of cleaner technologies is an effective way to address an organisation's corporate responsibility.

8.3.4 *Features to Improve Fuel Efficiency*

Modern aerodynamic features that can be fitted to freight vehicles improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions. These are discussed in more detail in the main Freight Strategy document.

8.3.5 In terms of support for environmental management measures, the Bedfordshire Green Business Network (GBN) has been active for a number of years assisting local businesses to obtain environmental standards such as ISO14001. The GBN has expressed a keen interest in working with the freight industry in the context of developing this strategy.

8.4 The Public Sector Fleet

8.4.1 A number of large public sector organisations in Bedford Borough control extensive fleets of vehicles, including the NHS, Bedfordshire Police and Royal Mail for example. There is considerable opportunity to engage such organisations in collaborative initiatives to investigate opportunities for fleet efficiency improvements with a view to developing best practice examples.

8.5 The Private Sector Fleet

8.5.1 There are numerous private sector businesses which operate vehicle fleets in Bedford Borough who will be encouraged to contribute to the Freight Strategy. At this stage it is not possible to quantify the scale of involvement expected of the private sector fleet. Notwithstanding this, it is hoped to engage a number of operators at all levels to act as 'Beacon Operators' with whom we can develop a set of Bedford Borough Case Studies. A specific action to engage local business in Bedford through the Bedford Business Improvement District members will be taken.

8.5.2 Specific contact has been made with a number of local industry representatives and ongoing discussion will take place to help move this strategy forward.

ACTION 8.1: Consider the implications of the fleet efficiency review in the context of this freight strategy.

ACTION 8.2: Approach the Bedford Business Improvement District members which operate sizeable fleets to engage them in the freight strategy.

9.0 Other Freight Modes

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Although the majority of freight is transported by road, it is appropriate to examine alternative modes of freight movements and continue discussions regarding their current and possibly expanded role within Bedford Borough where possible. The potential for rail, pipeline, waterborne and airborne freight movements in Bedford Borough is limited but will be considered as part of this strategy.

9.2 The Scope for Rail in Bedford Borough

9.2.1 There are two major rail lines which cross Bedford Borough, namely the Midland Main Line (MML), which runs through Bedford, and the East Coast Main Line (ECML) which crosses the eastern boundary of the borough. In addition, the Marston Vale line runs east – west between Bedford and Bletchley, where it links with the West Coast Main Line.

9.2.2 Midland Mainline Route Utilisation Study

The Midland Mainline is an intensively used “mixed purpose” railway. The mix includes, in the passenger side, electric London commuter/suburban services (First Capital Connect) and long distance and inter-urban services (Midland Mainline). In addition there are a variety of freight operations (EWS).

The key issues from the study relate to the infrastructure constraints of the route which exacerbates the conflict between the different types of train services using it, bearing in mind the substantial growth in operations in recent years.

9.2.5 *East-West Rail*

Proposals identified in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-regional Strategy for re-instating an east-west rail link between Oxford and Cambridge are currently being subject to further investigation. This would largely make use of existing rail infrastructure between Oxford and Bedford, via the Marston Vale rail link. However, there is currently a ‘missing link’ between Bedford and Cambridge, which has been the subject of a recent consultation by the East-West Rail Consortium. In addition to considering the former rail route between Bedford and Cambridge, this consultation also considered an alternative route via Luton and Stevenage.

9.2.6 A rail link between Bedford and Cambridge would create a new strategic east-west rail route east of Bedford, which could have potential to carry freight as well as passenger traffic. However, in the current economic climate this link is unlikely to be realised in the near future.

9.3 Waterways and Waterborne Freight

9.3.1 Although waterborne freight accounts for a limited amount of movements nationwide, there are a number of groups who are actively coordinating and promoting water as a commercially and environmentally-sustainable mode of transport for freight. In addition, the potential for and viability of waterborne freight movements through Bedford Borough could be further improved by the completion of the proposed Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway. This 40km £250 million scheme would provide a strategic link between the canals of the Midlands and the waterways of East Anglia, allowing navigation from the North Sea to the Severn. The completion of this waterway is classified as of national strategic importance by British Waterways and is supported by both the draft RSS for the South East and the Beds CC LTP.

9.4 Airport Connectivity

9.4.1 London Luton Airport is the only airport in the Bedford area that currently operates air bound freight movements on any measurable scale. Although London Luton only currently accounts for 1% of the UK's total airfreight volume, more operators are considering it as an operating base due to its location, facilities provided, smooth and fast delivery / collection times, lack of runway slot restrictions and its flexible tariffs.

9.5 Pipe Based Freight

9.5.1 As a form of freight transport, pipelines are very effective at moving large volumes of suitable goods economically and safely over a fixed route with little operational impact on the environment and the minimum use of energy resources.

9.5.2 There is considerable modal competition for the movement of petroleum products by pipelines in the UK. Using existing pipelines to their maximum potential and ensuring pipelines are considered favourably in the planning process in the future, are two areas of further investigation identified as part of the Bedford Borough Freight Strategy. Building further spurs off existing pipeline network could feed additional terminals and help to remove traffic from the roads and railways. Inviting pipeline and storage depot operators to be represented on any proposed Freight Quality Partnership would also prove useful in identifying the viability of increased pipe based freight movements within Bedford Borough.

ACTION 9.1: To create improved direct dialogue with groups responsible for the promotion of modes other than road based freight.

10.0 Consultation and Engagement

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 One of the actions of the strategy is to develop a closer working relationship with the freight industry. This will ensure that the issues and opinions of all groups associated with freight and its movements are represented and any proposed measures are developed in a coherent manner.

10.1.2 Several successful workshops have been organised bringing representatives of the industry, Members of the local authority and communities in Bedford Borough together.

10.2 Delivering a Freight Quality Partnership (FQP) for Bedford Borough

10.2.1 FQPs are formal partnerships between the freight industry, local government, local businesses, the local community, environmental groups and other interested stakeholders. FQPs encourage best practice in environmentally sensitive, economic, safe and efficient freight transport by those involved in transport planning, supply chain logistics, distribution, manufacturing and other key disciplines.

10.2.2 Considerable guidance and advice is available on how and why FQPs have been used around the country. FQPs can be set up for brief periods to discuss specific problems and issues. Larger FQPs may be useful for focused freight discussion about larger project or initiatives with freight implications.

10.2.3 At this stage it is not considered beneficial to seek to create a formal partnership for the Borough area. This may change in the future, but it is envisaged that to be most effective a partnership with the freight industry will need to cover a wider area.

ACTION 10.1: To build on existing contacts and maintain regular liaison with the freight industry, particularly the Road Haulage Association (RHA) and Freight Transport Association (FTA) as statutory consultees on proposed freight restrictions.

ACTION 10.2: Arrange further stakeholder workshops as required.

APPENDIX A: Bedford Borough Freight Strategy Action Plan.

Actions by chapter	Timescale	Delivery Body
ACTION 2.1: Carry out a focused review of wider Bedford Borough Planning and Minerals and Waste policies in relation to freight.	Ongoing	BBC
<p>ACTION 3.1: Consolidate the evidence base into a comprehensive freight monitoring system. The aspects to be monitored will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic flows and HGV proportions. • Fleet composition data and trip information of the vehicles operated by public and private Bedford Borough organisations to understand freight activity and assess carbon footprints. • Identifying and managing congestion hotspots affecting HGVs particularly. • Identifying and managing accident hotspots. • Air Quality consequences of the Strategy. <p>Highway Asset deterioration caused by heavy vehicles.</p>	Annually, depending on LTP reviews and monitoring budgets	BBC / Highways Agency/ Freight operators
ACTION 4.1: To ensure that freight delivery routeing, controls and infrastructure are considered as an integral part of planning proposals for Bedford Borough.	Ongoing	BBC/ Freight Operators
ACTION 5.1: Mapping of operating centres in collaboration with the Vehicle Operator Licensing Agency (VOSA)	2010/ongoing. Subject to available funding and Council priorities	BBC/VOSA
<p>ACTION 6.1: To promote and implement the Freight Route Network), including the following sub-actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To investigate freight activity in rural areas not on the FRN • To review and rationalise HGV route signing. • To investigate and implement weight limits and area-wide weight limits when requested. • To communicate Bedford Borough's FRN to the haulage industry, once this has been decided and any appropriate measures introduced <p>To monitor new developments and routes to ensure that the right routes are used and the impacts of freight are minimised.</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>Ongoing Ongoing</p> <p>2010 / 11</p> <p>As required Subject to available funding and Council priorities</p>	BBC / HA / Operators / neighbouring Authorities

Actions by chapter	Timescale	Delivery Body
ACTION 6.2: To explore opportunities to supply highways related freight infrastructure information to mapping companies for use in satellite navigation software	2010/2011 Subject to available funding and Council priorities	BBC/mapping companies
ACTION 6.3: To assess the potential role of logistics industry telematics systems and satellite navigation software in the development of the operational highway management aspects of this strategy.	2010/2011 Subject to available funding and Council priorities	BBC / Freight operators, including RHA and FTA
ACTION 6.4: To produce town centre and key freight generator access maps	2010 Subject to available funding and Council priorities	BBC/BID, Town centre manager/ Freight operators, local communities including RHA and FTA
ACTION 7.1: Explore the need and potential for a Bedford Borough based overnight lorry parking facility.	2010 Subject to available funding and Council priorities	BBC/private investors/DfT
ACTION 8.1: Consider the implications of the fleet efficiency review in the context of this freight strategy.	2010 Subject to available funding and Council priorities	BBC
ACTION 8.2: Approach the Bedford Business Improvement District members which operate sizeable fleets to engage them in the freight strategy.	2010 Subject to available funding and Council priorities	BBC/BID

Actions by chapter	Timescale	Delivery Body
ACTION 9.1: To create improved direct dialogue with groups responsible for the promotion of modes other than road based freight.	2010/ongoing	BBC/Freight operators
ACTION 10.1: To build on existing contacts and maintain regular liaison with the freight industry, particularly the Road Haulage Association (RHA) and Freight Transport Association (FTA) as statutory consultees on proposed freight restrictions.	Annually	BBC/Freight operators
ACTION 10.2: Arrange further stakeholder workshops as required.	Ongoing	BBC/Freight operators

Appendix B: DRAFT POLICY FOR THE CONTROL OF HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES BY TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER

Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) Control General

1. HGV traffic can be controlled by width, length and height restrictions but is most commonly controlled by weight restriction.
2. The most commonly used grounds for imposing weight restrictions are;
 - a) for environmental reasons where it is considered necessary to preserve or improve the amenities of an area through which a road or roads run; or
 - b) for structural reasons to avoid danger, or the likelihood of danger to persons or traffic.
3. Weight restrictions may be applied to points on the highway such as bridges or other structures, short lengths of road or complete zones.
4. The former are easier to enforce and much cheaper to sign than zonal restrictions but may not be able to achieve the objectives of an environmental scheme where it may be desired to remove unnecessary HGV traffic from a number of villages or parishes.
5. Zonal restrictions can also be confusing to drivers who may not be aware of the extent of the zone and will therefore be unsure whether or not their destination is within the restricted area.

Environmental Restrictions

6. Early views of the Road Haulage Association and Freight Transport Association will be sought in connection with any requested HGV TRO.
7. Prior to considering requests for environmental HGV restrictions, surveys will be required to determine the nature and extent of any problem in line with the criteria listed below. Lorry Watch as a local scheme could provide a mechanism to obtain this data.
8. Where a problem is considered to exist, regulation of HGVs by TRO will only be considered after the possibility of resolving the problem by agreeing appropriate routes with operators, or by positive HGV direction signing has been thoroughly considered.
9. There is a presumption that a weight limit will bring an environmental benefit, and a full environmental assessment would not normally be necessary, where the proposed restriction is along a Route for Access and the alternative route is along a Route for Movement (through route). (i.e. a higher classification alternative route)

- 10 In some instances a night time only ban might be the most appropriate way of maximising environmental benefit whilst minimising disruption and costs to operators.
- 11 The following conditions must all exist before HGV control by order will be considered:
- a) a minimum number of 30 through HGV movements, which could reasonably be expected to transfer to an alternative route, must be made each day through the area;
 - b) the number of HGV movements that could reasonably be expected to be removed must represent at least 50% of the total number of HGV movements in the area;
 - c) There is an alternative route available which is at least equally suited to the passage of HGVs taking into account road construction and maintenance, road hierarchy, accident rates, facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, conservation areas and reduced community impact (fewer residential properties passed);
 - d) the alternative route will not impose unacceptable additional costs for operators when set against the environmental and road suitability benefits of the proposed restrictions;
 - e) where restrictions are proposed on Routes for Movement (through routes) there is a significant net environmental benefit when comparing the route of the restriction with the alternative route or routes and taking into account noise (night and day), air quality and structural damage caused by ground borne vibrations.
 - f) a scheme can be defined that can be clearly signed, easily understood by drivers, and is largely self-enforcing.
- 12 environmental weight restrictions will include exemptions for access for the purpose of loading and unloading goods and for garaging of vehicles within a zone. Special exemption will be allowed for public service vehicles, emergency service vehicles, agricultural vehicles and vehicles required for highway maintenance.
- 13 Weight restrictions can be based on max gross vehicle weight or axle weight with the latter being used principally for restrictions on bridges. The usual restrictions are for gross vehicle weights of 7.5tonnes or 17 tonnes which approximate to the previously used 3 tons and 5tons un-laden weight restrictions.

Structural Weight Restrictions

- 14 Restrictions will be made only at the request of the Borough Bridge Engineer.

Appendix C: Bedford Borough Preferred Freight Route Network Plan

