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Wiltshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Edward Draper
Chairman – Western Area Committee
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Please ask for : Robert Murphy

Our ref : RM/SP/FS

Your ref :

7 February 2007

Dear Councillor Draper

Heavy Goods Vehicles driving through villages

Thank you for your letter dated 31 January 2007.

I note the Committee's considerable concerns regarding HGV traffic and, while you do not refer to this matter in your letter, increasing anecdotal evidence suggests that satellite navigation systems are responsible for increasing traffic flows along roads that are not suitable for through journeys. This issue was discussed at a recent Wiltshire Freight Quality Partnership meeting and we have responded to the Government's recent public consultation on its 'Review of In-Vehicle Information Systems Legislation'. This is a preliminary consultation stage and any proposals will be subject to further public consultation as part of the statutory process.

Before answering your particular request, I should first like to briefly outline the County Council's policy on freight.

The County Council, through its Local Transport Plan, is seeking to achieve a more sustainable pattern of distribution that balances the needs of the economy, environment and society. To this end, we have established a Freight Quality Partnership (FQP) and have a freight strategy that seeks to manage freight movements in the county. A key component of this strategy is the establishment of a two-tier system of lorry routes, comprising a network of strategic routes and a supporting network of local lorry routes. Work is ongoing to implement the freight strategy and freight routes in accordance with the Regional Freight Map in the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy.

With regard to dealing with local HGV issues, the County Council typically follows a phased approach which first seeks to establish the significance and nature of the problem. If warranted, discussions are then undertaken with haulage operators and any appropriate signage changes are implemented. Only after these actions have been carried out would the Council explore the use of traffic management measures, such as the imposition of weight limits.



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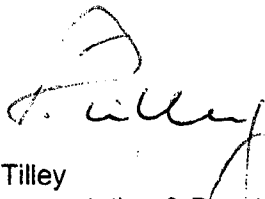
In terms of your request for a comprehensive traffic plan, I am afraid that this is not something that the County Council can undertake at this time – new area plans will be considered during the development of the third Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16.

However, your request to exclude HGVs travelling through villages within Salisbury District is something that we can explore further. As we are currently progressing freight measures in three areas of the county and have an outstanding number of local freight issues in other locations, we are developing an assessment methodology to enable us to prioritise where we should next focus our limited resources. It is envisaged that this methodology will be finalised by mid-2007. Given this, if you could provide me with details of the roads where you would like HGV traffic management measures investigated, I will ensure that these are included in the initial assessment to be presented to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Economic Development for approval.

Lastly, with regard to your comment on the safety of local residents, the County Council takes road casualty reduction in Wiltshire very seriously. To achieve our road safety targets, we have a joint Road Safety Strategy with the Police and Health Authority covering both accident reduction and accident prevention. - The resources available for accident reduction involving engineering measures are used for remedial measures at the locations with the worst accident problems - this information is established from the monitoring of injury accidents which occur in the County. Considerable resources are also focussed on accident prevention measures, including driver education – this is considered particularly important given that in 95% of accidents, driver error is a contributory factor.

I hope that the above is helpful.

Yours sincerely



P Tilley
Transportation & Development Manager