



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

AREA PANEL TWO 3 NOVEMBER 2004

Report of the Assistant Director – Highways, Transportation and Waste Management

Road Classification and Weight Limits



SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1.1 At the last Area Panel meeting, I was asked to clarify the classification of roads running through Alvaston, Chellaston and Sinfen, and to indicate where weight restrictions applied.
- 1.2 Road classifications follow guidance issued by the Department of Transport and conform to a strict hierarchy. The most significant roads, those which are important parts of long distance routes, are traditionally managed and controlled by the Highways Agency. These include motorways and trunk roads.
- 1.3 Most other roads are managed and controlled by the Council and the classification of these is the responsibility of the Council, but must be approved by the Department of Transport. The most important local roads are classified as principal roads and will be identified by a number as well as an A classification. The hierarchy follows the following order of importance:
 - Primary routes
 - A class routes
 - Other classified routes
 - Un-classified routes
- 1.4 This system of classification is, perhaps, most commonly seen in a road atlas. The classifications will be indicated by colour. Motorways blue, primary routes green, A class routes red and other classified routes yellow.
- 1.5 The classification of a road will usually, although not always, give some indication to the width of the road, the construction standards and even how often the road will be inspected. The classifications will indicate how important the road is for the movement of traffic.
- 1.6 The plan on display shows the classification of all roads within the Area Panel area.
- 1.7 Weight restrictions, which can be introduced by a Highway Authority, can take two forms. Weight restrictions can be introduced where the road, or any part of it, for example a bridge, cannot safely carry vehicles over a certain weight. This type of restriction would be indicated by a sign prohibiting vehicles of that weight from driving on that part of the road.

- 1.8 The other type of weight restriction, often referred to as an environmental restriction, is where the highway authority wish to prevent the use of the road by unnecessary vehicles. In this case, the weight restriction would be indicated by a sign together with an additional sign saying "Except for Access".
- 1.9 The Council has a duty to make sure that people and business have access to their property from the public highway. One of the fundamental principles of highway law is that there is an assumed right of access to public roads. Where the Council wishes to restrict this access it must justify its reasons and consider objections. This is why environmental weight limits always exempt people who need to use the road to gain access to their property.
- 1.10 The plan on display shows the weight restrictions that apply within the Area Panel boundary. It is worth pointing out that the proposed weight limit on Shardlow Road, which has been made possible by the construction of the Alvaston by-pass, will exempt vehicles who need to use the road for access. It is also worth pointing out that the weight limit that applies to vehicles inside the ring road is one which applies to all routes. Its purpose is to ensure that commercial vehicles that are simply travelling through Derby use the ring road rather than travelling through the city centre.
- 1.11 At the last Area Panel meeting it was noted that we were still awaiting information from the Highways Agency about the impact of the Alvaston by-pass on goods vehicles using the A514. Once this information is available we will again examine the request for a weight limit on the A514 and report back to Area Panel.
- 1.12 It should be noted that weight limits are very difficult to enforce. It is very difficult to know, just by looking at a vehicle, what its gross vehicle weight is. Some very large vehicles can be below 7.5 tonnes. Equally, weight limits often cover large areas hence it is impossible to tell, at a glance, whether a vehicle is abusing the restriction or gaining legitimate access to some part of the area. The responsibility for enforcement rests exclusively with the police.

PROPOSED ACTION

2. To note the report.

For more information contact: David Gartside 01332 715080 e-mail david.gartside@derby.gov.uk
Background papers: None or list
List of appendices: None or list

