

8 Network Management Duty

NETWORK MANAGEMENT IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT 2004

The County Council has realised that the challenges of The Traffic Management Act (2004), the requirements of the Second LTP (including the 'shared priority for transport') and its own Customer First initiative involving the creation of a corporate call centre could not be met with the historical structure of Transportation. As a result and as part of the Best Value Improvement Plan, the four service areas have been reorganised to concentrate the Network Management duty under the Highway Network Manager in three Groups:

- Streetworks, Traffic Systems and Parking
- Promotion and Development
- Highways on Call (Customer services)

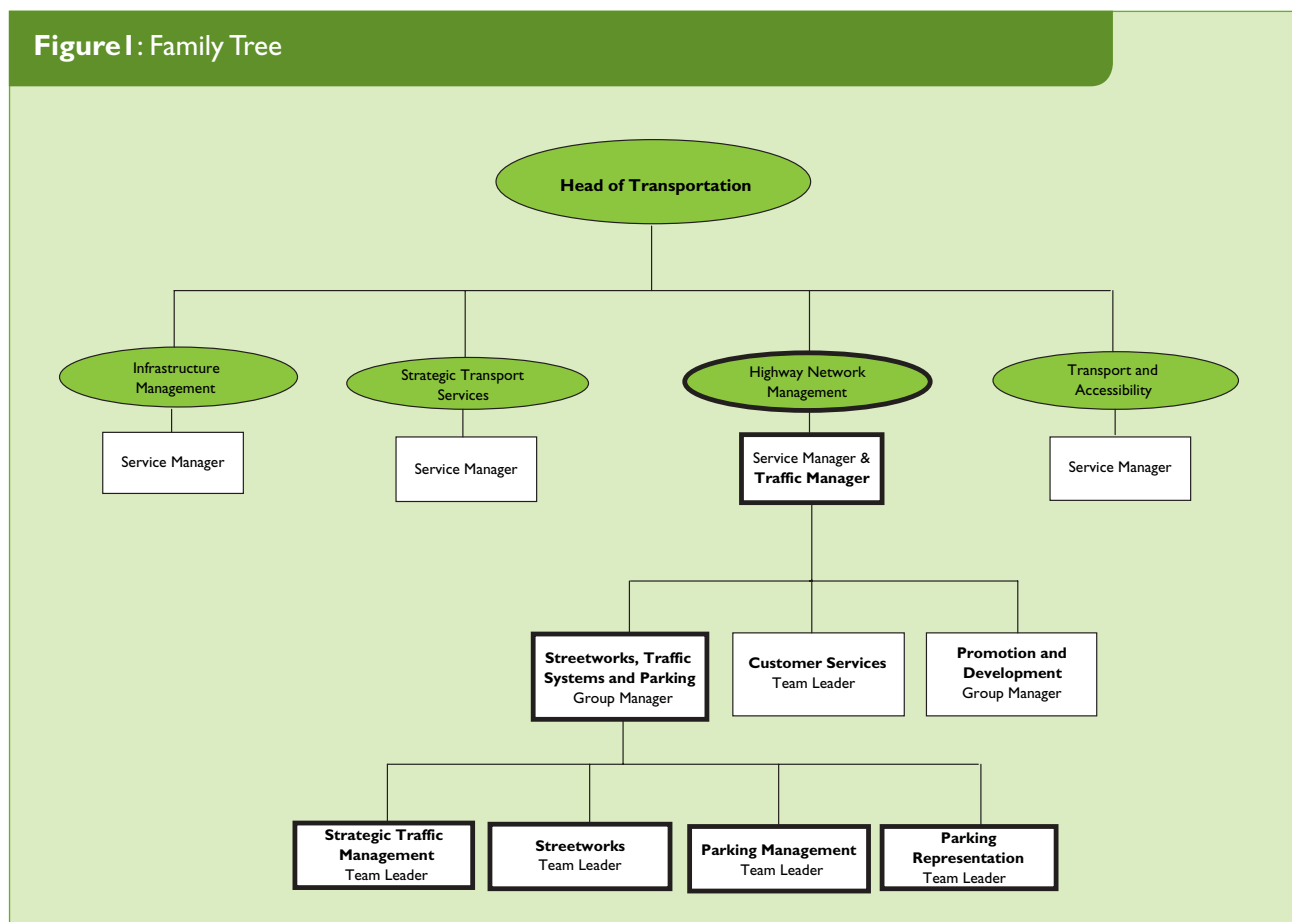
The Streetworks team is now part of the Traffic Systems Group that promotes strategic traffic management issues including Urban Traffic Management and Control, while local traffic management activities have been transferred to a

local delivery function under the Area Maintenance Group Managers. Promotion and Development focuses on encouraging modal shift (cycling, walking, bus use and travel planning) whilst Highways on Call responds to individual customer concerns and feedback. Highways on Call is being migrated to the Customer First corporate call centre in early 2006.

The reorganised Highway Network Management service (see family tree below) has specific responsibility for the tackling congestion and enhancing our environment transport priorities. The structure ensures that there is sufficient separation from service delivery to enable the objective administration of the Highway Network Management service and to manage all users of the highway fairly.

The Highway Network Manager, Keith Shaw, was appointed Traffic Manager for Buckinghamshire County Council in September 2005. He is a second tier service manager reporting directly to the Head of Transportation. The County Council is taking the following actions to implement the requirements of the Traffic Management Act (TMA):

Figure 1: Family Tree



CONSULTATION (EXTERNAL)

Consultation with neighbouring authorities

The County Council held a forum on the 20th November 2005 to discuss the implication of the TMA and the coordination of all streetworks, roadworks and events with neighbouring authorities. The group has agreed to meet quarterly in the future.

Meetings have also been held with the Highways Agency to agree the diversion route for any unplanned incidents on the M4 and M40. Further meetings are needed to fully address that issue.

The County Council also attended an eastern region coordination meeting hosted by the Highways Agency and a south east regional meeting hosted by Surrey County Council. It is intended that these regional meetings will happen every six months.

Planned events

The County Council has established Safety Advisory Groups with District Councils, the Police, Fire and Ambulance services that meet monthly to review all requests for events especially where they affect the traffic on the strategic highway network. The aim of the groups is to manage the way an event is organised so that it achieves its outcomes and traffic disruption is minimised or eliminated. A draft protocol has been prepared for managing planned events and will be further developed in consultation with stakeholders and District Councils. A list of all planned events will be used to prepare traffic management plans.

Unplanned events

The County Council is developing a protocol to deal with unplanned events in consultation with stakeholders the Police and District Councils. Discussions with the Highways Agency are ongoing to agree a protocol for any motorway closures in Buckinghamshire that require traffic diversions onto the County network. Diversion routes and any necessary actions to relieve congestion on alternative routes will be agreed. Standby officers will inform the Traffic Manager of any overnight incident that requires ongoing road closure, who will ensure that all actions taken are adequate and determine if any further diversions or removal of works may be required to ease traffic flow.

Third party functions

The County Council will meet with District Councils quarterly to liaise over street cleaning and refuse collection arrangements and ensure that these cause minimum disruption to traffic. These meetings will also consider arrangements for cyclical activities such as gully emptying, grass cutting and weed killing. The County Council will work on the presumption that these activities will not happen during peak periods on traffic sensitive streets and the Strategic Highway Network.

CONSULTATION (INTERNAL)

Maintenance

Meetings have been held with the Infrastructure Management Service to discuss managing highway works under the TMA to ensure a consistency in approach for all work on the highway. All works will be registered on the Street Works Register and will be co-ordinated by the streetworks team. A direct computer link from the general maintenance ordering system to Street Works Register will be in place. This will ensure that works notice can be raised at the same time as the works order. Area Managers will continue to chair monthly Local Delivery Plan meetings to discuss and coordinate the forward plan of activities on the network pending the appointment of a Programme Manager.

It has been agreed that all works on traffic sensitive streets will be restricted and undertaken outside traffic sensitive times.

Corporate management team

As far as practically possible the Transportation Service will strive to raise awareness of the TMA across the County Council, to ensure that other service areas understand the initiatives and tasks being tackled and consider and respond to the implications of their actions upon traffic congestion across Buckinghamshire.

Term maintenance contractor / consultant

Meetings have been held with both the term maintenance contractor Fitzpatrick and consultant Jacobs Babbie to ensure that the partners fully understand the requirements of the TMA and the objectives of the County Council's congestion strategy. The authority will ensure that there is a consistency in approach for all work on the highway by all contractors.

Development works

The County Council is applying the same procedure for all works on the highway so that works by third parties (e.g. developers) will be subject to the same requirements and construction traffic will be managed to reduce peak time operations.

ROUTE PRIORITISATION

Traffic sensitive streets

The County Council will review the designation of traffic sensitive streets in line with the new criteria under the TMA once it is made available.

Winter maintenance

The County Council has reviewed winter gritting routes and introduced new routes in October 2005. The selection of routes includes consideration of bus routes, areas of pedestrian activity and the incidence of winter casualties. Provision is also being made to grit appropriate cycling and walking routes.

Freight strategy

Information on freight usage and HGV routes across Buckinghamshire has been gathered and is currently being analysed. This information will be used to develop the Strategic Network Hierarchy, the evolution of the Freight Strategy and the designation of appropriate routes, supported by the Freight Quality Partnership, comprising of operators and users.

Strategic network hierarchy

The County Council will be reviewing the strategic highway network and assessing use of existing routes by different modes of travel and users (including freight, buses, cyclists and pedestrians) to establish a Strategic Network Hierarchy. This will enable the authority to prioritise routes for different forms of traffic and to balance conflicting demands in certain areas. The Strategic Network Hierarchy will be redefined and form the base for development of other strategies, including freight.

SYSTEMS

Data management and recording

Central data recording of licenses issued under Highways Act 1980 and New Roads and Street

Works Act 1991, events, road closures, diversion routes, skip, scaffold, hoardings and vehicle crossings will enhance the management of the network. Other routine maintenance works carried out by District Councils will also be recorded. Symology / Insight software will reflect the current notice periods for each works category.

Map based co ordination

The development of corporate information systems using a GIS mapping interface will enable the County Council to improve the co-ordination of activities on the highway network.

The enhanced mapping system will provide the following, from April 2006:

- Warnings if plotted works are not within appropriate proximity to the recorded street
- In-line coordination conflict checking as works are recorded
- Coordination conflict checking including both principal and diversionary routes

Traffic information

Roadspace availability data is currently presented on the Empress website. The County Council plans to incorporate roadspace information on its own website automatically once the latest version of Symology / Insight has been installed. The County Council is also discussing with councils in the Eastern region about sharing roadworks data and making this available to the public on a regional website.

TARGETS & MONITORING

Key performance indicators

The following indicators for highway and street works are under consideration. These will be refined in conjunction with the South East and Anglian HAUC.

- Number of activities – Utility & highway works
- Average duration of works – Utilities & highways
- Number of days S74 overrun – Utility & highway works
- Number of extension requests – Utility & highway works

- Number of duration challenges – Utility & highway works
- Number of S56 directions issued – Utility & highway works
- Number of S58 notices issued
- Number of FPNs issued – Utility & highway works

County Council streetworks inspectors will monitor both roadworks and streetworks and report monthly via the TRANstat performance management process.

Monitoring

The County Council is monitoring journey time reliability on the urban and inter-urban Priority Congestion Management Corridors. Baseline data will be gathered in early 2006 and targets will be determined during 2006/07. Peak hour flows for both Wycombe and Aylesbury using cordon counts and screenline data collection is programmed for summer 2006.

BVPI 100

The number of days of temporary traffic controls or road closures on traffic sensitive roads caused by local authority roadworks per kilometre of traffic sensitive road. The total number of days temporary traffic controls (manual or by traffic lights) were in place on traffic sensitive streets or the road was closed, due to local authority road works per kilometre of traffic sensitive streets. (Exclude traffic controls at road works that were completed in less than a day). Performance regime (BVPI 100) and a target of 0.15 days per kilometre by 2010/11 has been set.