



# The Future of Freight in Staffordshire

Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce

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# Working towards a net-zero transport system

- Achieving a Net Zero Transport System by 2050 will ultimately be reliant upon a combined approach influenced by spatial planning and place-based solutions to deliver transport decarbonisation.
- Placemaking will play a vital role in managing the effects and operation of freight in Staffordshire. It will involve working with local communities and considering the characteristics of locations earmarked for potential development.
- The current Staffordshire Freight Strategy identifies the objective of minimising any adverse impacts of freight in the county whilst maximising its benefits. Freight and logistics not only offers significant economic benefits but may also be accompanied by significant impacts on the highway network.
- The Staffordshire Economic Strategy sets a vision of benefiting from economic growth including development along key strategic corridors and the importance of not missing opportunities afforded by Staffordshire's location at the centre of the UK and its Strategic Road and Rail Network.

# Staffordshire's Local Transport Plan

- The new Local Transport Plan will include a section on the future of Freight and Logistics in Staffordshire, the first draft of this document should be available around March 2025.
- LTP4 is currently under development, informed by a comprehensive consultation exercise, including a new online tool Let's Talk Transport.
- As part of this consultation exercise, we are developing a Freight and Logistics related questionnaire for businesses, to help inform the Freight section of the LTP and understand likely future priorities and asks in relation to Freight and Logistics in Staffordshire.
- Topics covered in this questionnaire are likely to include: fleet information, use of alternative fuel vehicles, business priorities, modal shift, decarbonisation, integration, parking and innovation.
- The Chamber has agreed to distribute this questionnaire to its Members. The questionnaire will be available to complete electronically via our Let's Talk Transport webpage.

# Staffordshire Freight and Communities Forum

- The Staffordshire Freight and Communities Forum was established in 2018 to offer a dedicated platform to address various issues related to freight traffic in Staffordshire with the involvement of numerous key stakeholders and collaborative working. The Forum focusses on balancing community concerns, finding realistic solutions to reduce HGV impacts and supporting businesses relying on timely transportation and delivery.
- The forum meets every 6 months unless an urgent issue arises for discussion.
- The current Membership of the forum includes:  
Staffordshire County Council, Highways England, Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, HS2 group, Staffordshire Parish Councils Association and Members of Parliament.
- Local planning authorities and other community leaders are invited as necessary where specific local issues require discussion.
- The forum discusses all relevant information from key stakeholders presented during any forum meeting and attempts to come to a consensus on the most appropriate course of action.

# Community Issues - examples

Local communities have identified various concerns in relation to freight and logistics operations and movements including:

- Road Safety - communities may experience increased risk of accidents, particularly on routes not designed for the movement of large commercial vehicles. Vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists may be at greater risk from large vehicles with limited visibility and maneuverability.
- Infrastructure damage – larger vehicles can put significant strain on highways and bridges, leading to increased maintenance issues and costs.
- Noise and air pollution – freight transport, particularly diesel commercial vehicles contribute to noise and air pollution which may negatively affect quality of life in some communities and impact on sensitive ecosystems.
- Community character – increased freight movements can change the character of an area making it less desirable for residents, visitors and businesses.
- Economic disruption – while freight transport supports economic activity, it can also cause disruption for local businesses, making customer access more difficult, causing congestion and delaying deliveries.

# Operators Issues - examples

Freight and logistics operators have previously identified various issues which may affect the efficiency of their business including:

- Inadequate infrastructure – lack of safe, secure and sufficient vehicle parking, rest areas and weigh stations can disrupt operations and result in safety concerns.
- Roadworks – frequent maintenance projects can result in diversions, lane closures and unpredictable traffic movements, leading to journey delays and disruption.
- Limited connectivity – lack of reliable internet connectivity in some areas can hinder use of communications technology, tracking and navigation.
- Charging infrastructure – the availability of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles remains limited resulting in range anxiety and logistical challenges for operators.

# Potential Improvements - examples

Examples of potential improvements that could be included within the new Local Transport Plan include:

- Improved overnight HGV parking facilities and driver welfare facilities
- More efficient traffic routing, speed limits and traffic management measures
- Modified delivery restrictions
- Freight consolidation centres
- Promotion and support for alternative fuel vehicles such as EVs especially for last mile deliveries
- Improved and increased supporting infrastructure such as EV charging stations

Many of these potential improvements will require collaboration with stakeholders and key partners such as Local Planning Authorities, Staffordshire Police, Logistics Operators and infrastructure providers. The LTP will identify these as 'Asks' going forward which will require discussion/action/progression.