

Freight Strategy Document

The following notes refer primarily to the Freight Strategy Document, as published at:

https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/insights-service/local-transport-plan/supporting_documents/06%20Freight%20Strategy%201.pdf

General comments

Positives

- Inclusion of active travel and rail for freight purposes.

Could be improved

- The opening page speaks about the ‘Golden Triangle’ which ninety percent of the UK population can reach within a four hour drive. At some point it would be good to include accessibility by other transport options, to highlight any disparity – for example, what percentage of the population can access the region in four hours *without* driving? This would serve to put some emphasis on the car-centric nature of our current local, regional, and national transport system, highlighting improvements needed to other options.
- When talking about freight hubs (page three), the focus is on the impact caused by freight movements on Warwickshire’s roads. These sites also sources of employment and how staff travel is an important consideration for traffic flows, especially at peak times. Accessibility to these sites by non-driving means is important. While outside the specific scope of freight movements, given this is a related matter, this strategy should refer through to other strategies.
- The graphics on this strategy document feature lorries and vans. Given the importance of modal shift, both rail and cargo e-cycles should feature prominently as a subtle indication to changing how freight moves in the county.

Negatives

- None in general.

Focus on: Freight Policies

- The numbered Freight policies suggests these may be in a particular order of preference or priority e.g., that F1 is more important than F7. It should be clarified whether this is or is not the case.
- **F1** – As per comments elsewhere in this review, it is important to move away from using “encourage” and “promote” in the first instance. A modal shift needs to be enabled for freight and commerce in just the same way as it needs to be for personal transport. This objective does then go on to talk about providing infrastructure, but only in a very non-committal way; *“This may require the introduction of new and improved infrastructure...”* –

“may” needs changing to “will”.

As an example, we are less likely to see a shift to cargo e-cycles for last mile deliveries if there is not a widespread, well-connected, safe, coherent and accessible cycle network that can be utilised for this purpose – in much the same way as for personal transport, people will not want to ride on roads that are (or are perceived to be) dangerous, and employers may find risk assessments unacceptable.

- **F2** – This policy should be expanded to include a commitment to renewable power for electric recharging stations, including on-site or nearby generation to cover as much of the power requirements as is reasonably practical (supported by a 100% renewable-matched supply from the National Grid to cover shortfalls and interruptions only).
- **F4** – This policy is very vague and doesn’t define any of the “efforts” that are intended to improve the Strategic and Major Road Networks. There must be a commitment that there will be no expansion of road capacity in Warwickshire where this is under the Council’s control, and that the Authority will object in the strongest terms to the expansion of those roads in the county where they are outside of its control.

It's worth re-iterating that the solution to congestion and its impact on travel time and reliability is by reducing the number of vehicle movements on the network. This includes moving freight from motor vehicles (HGVs, LGVs, vans etc.) to other options, as has been noted in this strategy, but also for reducing other vehicles on the road network.

- **F5** – As has already been noted above, Warwickshire needs to go beyond just “promoting” active travel solutions. It needs to enable them by providing the high quality cycle infrastructure that can support the transition.
- **F7** – Similar to the above, “[*encouraging*] freight vehicles to use appropriate routes” is the wrong framing here. Freight operators and drivers must be actively prevented from accessing routes that are not suitable for them. This includes prohibiting HGVs from accessing narrow, town centre locations where they may be in close proximity to more vulnerable road users (as per the Road User Hierarchy), or their presence can cause damage to streets and old buildings.

This might be achieved by changing road layout designs to make certain streets inaccessible to vehicles over a certain size, such as through width or height restrictions, or tight turning angles.