

## **Satellite Navigation Systems: The Use of Inappropriate Routes by Heavy Goods Vehicles within Devon**

Briefing Note from Executive Director Environment, Economy and Culture

### **Historic Position**

The issue of HGVs using inappropriate routes in rural areas is a national issue and one that has received significant media coverage in recent years. The blame is often laid on satellite navigation systems.

Devon County Council shares these concerns and has worked with hauliers that operate in the South West via the South West Regional Freight Forum and its own Freight Quality Partnerships. Devon in partnership with the Regional Freight Forum has also reviewed communications with the mapping companies that supply information to the satellite navigation manufacturers with the hope of generating a more robust system that caters for larger vehicles.

This approach has been approved by the Devon County Council Executive (report no EEC/07/321/HQ and Minute 676 refers) and promoted by the National Traffic Managers forum.

### **Update**

Devon chaired a meeting of the South West Regional Freight Forum on 29 October 2009, the key topic of discussion being freight routeing and how Local Authorities communicate with the industry. The meeting was attended by representatives of Local Authorities, Department for Transport, Ordnance Survey, Government Office South West and Freight Bodies; Freight Transport Association and Road Haulage Association.

From discussions it became clear that the extent of the issue is still not known, from Devon's work to map reported incidents (an approach commended by the DfT representative) it would seem that there is no clear pattern, nor a pattern that would necessarily reflect perceptions that inappropriate route selection is linked exclusively with sat navs. For example the peripheral areas are worst affected, not as one would expect from sat nav where routes would be cut through the centre of Devon between larger communities.

The extent of the sat nav issue needs to be established and it is vital that information is gathered direct from the freight industry, the FTA and RHA will be polling their members on sat nav usage a move supported by the RFF. Additionally, Devon have developed a questionnaire targeting the haulage industry to establish better communications and what can be done to assist in route selection, this is to be distributed to RHA and FTA members.

Chris McCarthy

**Electoral Divisions: All**