Road Network Policy Consultation

Contents

Executive summary

1. The road network in England is organised through three main systems:

   - Major national roads form a strategic road network (SRN), operated by the Highways Agency on behalf of the Secretary of State;

   - Important routes for medium-to-long-distance navigation form a primary route network (PRN);

   - Other than motorways, all roads are A roads, B roads, classified unnumbered or unclassified according to their importance and use.

2. The SRN is a network of national importance, and it is appropriate for it to be administered by a single organisation. However, both the PRN and road classification are of primarily local importance.

3. Policies in this area have not been revisited for many years, and still largely reflect the centralising ethos of the 1960s. Decisions cannot be made on the smallest of changes without the approval of Whitehall. In the era of localism, this is no longer appropriate. We propose to transfer responsibility for classification and primary routing to local authorities. We also want to restate policy on the SRN to provide greater clarity about its definition.

4. Under the new approach:

   - The Department would remain responsible for the SRN in England;

   - The Department would maintain a list of 'primary destinations', but local authorities would decide by which routes they are best connected, working together where necessary; and

   - Local authorities would have responsibility for road classification in their area.

5. To help with a more decentralised system, it is important that records are kept in a standardised fashion. Local authorities will be responsible for recording the status of their network, and for sharing the information with interested parties.

6. Since policy in this area was last examined, there has been a significant growth in satellite navigation. We are keen to find ways in which private 'satnav' companies can work together with central and local government to help one another.

How to Respond

The consultation period began on **1 February** and will run until **1 May**, please ensure that your response reaches us by that date If you would like further copies of this consultation document it can be found at (**web address**) or you can contact the Department if you would like alternative formats (Braille, audio CD,etc).

Please send consultation responses to

Roads Policy Division
Zone 5/25
Department for Transport
76 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR

When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation please make it clear who the organisation represents, and where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

Freedom of Information

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.
The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

1. Road Systems

1.2   The road network operates as one single entity. In order to help motorists navigate from one place to another, and to help with effective management of the network, there are three systems through which roads are organised and classified nationwide - the strategic road network, the primary route network and roads classification.

Strategic Road Network

1.3   The first system is designed to cover national level journeys, made on the nation's busiest and most important inter-urban roads. While the **strategic road network** (SRN) constitutes only 2.4% of the nation's roads, it carries around a third of all traffic and two thirds of all freight. Individual roads on the SRN are known as trunk roads.

1.4   The SRN exists to connect the country together, and includes most of the motorways and large-scale interurban roads in England. Almost no journeys will start or end on the SRN; but almost all national-level journeys will make use of part of it at some stage.

1.5   The SRN is owned by the Secretary of State for Transport, and operated on his behalf by the Highways Agency (HA). It is therefore the only road system that is defined by legal ownership, rather than policy decisions by officials. The HA acts as the highway authority.[1]

1.6   Separate but similar arrangements exist for Scotland and Wales.

Primary Route Network

1.7   The **primary route network** (PRN) was introduced in the 1960s. This designates routes between major settlements and important destinations across the UK, with the aim of providing clear ways to access most

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[1] All other publicly maintainable roads are operated as **local authority** (LA) **roads**. Where two-tier local government operates, the county council is the local highway authority (LHA); elsewhere the unitary council, London borough or metropolitan district council will be the local highway authority.

places. Primary routes are marked green on most road maps, as opposed to the more common red of an ordinary A road; and road signs are green with white and yellow text.

1.8   Outside of national parks, few points in England are more than ten miles from a primary route. A motorist making a regional or national journey should therefore be able to make all but the start and finish of their journey using the PRN. Generally speaking, primary routes tend to be more capable of handling large volumes of traffic and act as a recommended route for medium or long distance journeys.

1.9   The PRN is a devolved matter. Several primary routes run between England and Scotland or England and Wales, meaning cooperation is required.

Roads Classification

1.10   All drivers are familiar with A roads and B roads. These form part of a larger system, known as roads classification. Ignoring motorways, which have a special legal status, all UK roads fall into the following four categories:[2]

- **A roads** – major roads intended to provide large-scale transport links within or between areas.

- **B roads** – roads intended to connect different areas, and to feed traffic between A roads and smaller roads on the network.

- **Classified unnumbered** – smaller roads intended to connect together unclassified roads with A and B roads, and often linking a housing estate or a village to the rest of the network. Similar to 'minor roads' on an Ordnance Survey map and sometimes known unofficially as C roads.

- **Unclassified** – local roads intended for local traffic. The vast majority (60%) of roads in the UK fall within this category.

(Public rights of way not covered by these categories are not included in this consultation).

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[2] Motorways are classified as Special Roads – roads where certain types of traffic are prohibited. This arrangement is determined by statute, and is not covered in this consultation.

Historically, there has been a distinction between principal and non-principal/secondary roads, with principal roads assumed to be A-roads or better. Although this term can be found in legislation, we aim to avoid using it when describing current policy.

1.11 As originally conceived, these four classes form a hierarchy. As vehicle traffic moves to a higher category of road, it should be able to travel more quickly and efficiently and be better separated from pedestrians. Thinking has since moved on, and in particular we no longer share the same impulse towards segregation of traffic. Nevertheless, the fundamental principle remains – large volumes of traffic and traffic travelling long distances should be using higher classes of road; smaller amounts of traffic travelling at lower speeds over shorter distances should be using lower classes of road.

1.12 Roads classification is a devolved matter outside of England, although a common system of route numbering is used.

Local Methods - Roads Categorisation

1.13 Matters are further complicated by the existence of a fourth system – the system of roads categorisation run independently by local authorities. All roads are placed into one of a series of categories, usually reflecting likely traffic, strategic importance, environmental considerations or other factors important to the local authority. Whereas the three nationally-organised systems tend to focus on helping motorists get from destination to destination, road categorisation tends to focus on the needs of the local highway authority in managing the road.

1.14 This is a working arrangement that enables authorities to organise their own road network in a manner which is operationally convenient, and which indicates those roads that need to be prioritised for maintenance or investment. This system is designed to be as flexible as possible, to ease the practical management of the network. Most local authorities have modified the criteria for categorisation to match their specific needs and management ethos, and there are no plans to impose a single system across the whole country. [3]

1.15 It would seem appropriate for this system to be linked with its nationally-organised counterparts, but this is not generally the case. Many authorities tend to avoid changing the classification of a road (or its status as part of the PRN) because of the bureaucratic and overcomplicated process involved. As a result, they will change the categorisation of a road without considering whether they should also change the classification.

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[3] In this system, local authorities will generally separately classify footways and cycle tracks, using a hierarchy that is based on the needs of pedestrians or cyclists, separately from the vehicular traffic on the associated carriageway. There is also a separate classification scheme used by highways authorities in their dealings with utility companies.

1.16 Consequently, a significant gap has developed between categorisation and publicly-available information on classification and the PRN.

Forming a Single Network

1.17 The three national systems work together on a single road network, to assist different types of journey:

- National journeys will usually rely on the strategic road network for most of the way;

- Regional and county journeys will often rely on the primary route network; and

- Local journeys will be guided by roads classification.

1.18 Of course, these categories are not separate. All journeys are likely to begin with a local element, whether they are crossing the nation or going to the shops. However, the three systems represent three tiers – national, regional and local – of the road network.

1.19 Local systems on road categorisation are designed to reflect particular local circumstances, and we do not intend to force them into a single national framework. However, local authorities have indicated that given greater freedom of management, over time they would be able to adapt the classification of roads to better reflect the categorisation system used for management purposes.

Challenges

1.20 Policy on each of these systems mostly dates from the 1960s, when major reforms were implemented in the years following the 1964 Worboys Report. The approaches taken still seem sound and sensible, and we do not propose to tear up existing classifications and start afresh. Nevertheless, technological developments and organisational change mean that there is benefit in revisiting and restating some aspects of the underlying policy. It is also some time since policy has been made available in one single document, or has been published in a publicly accessible format.

1.21 It is important that responsibility for each tier of the network is managed by the right people. At present, policy responsibility is strongly

centralised, with the Secretary of State for Transport having to authorise every change to road status in England. Given that most of these decisions will mostly impact local communities, we believe that it is time to start decentralising responsibility.

1.22   It is sensible that policies on one tier should support policies on another. At a basic level, the PRN should encompass the whole of the SRN, and all roads on the PRN should be A roads or motorways. More generally, all three systems should be performing distinct functions, which mutually support one another, and which link with local arrangements.

1.23   In the current fiscal climate it is necessary to manage the network in such a way as to minimise the amount of work required. It is vital that information passes to the right people, so that map data can be kept up to date and an accurate picture of the road network can be maintained.

1.24   Above all, it is essential that the road network is organised and signed in such a way that motorists are provided with clear, sensible directions. A well-run, up-to-date network, managed by the people who best understand the situation on the ground, offers a better service to the ordinary driver.

2. Strategic Road Network

2.1   The strategic road network (SRN) links together key locations in the UK, and carries large volumes of traffic. Taken as a whole, it comprises the routes which have a strategic role in linking the country together. A road on the SRN is known as a trunk road.

2.2   Individual trunk roads are expected to be roads that are important on a national level. They are essential links used by large numbers of people and goods vehicles when driving to other parts of the country. The SRN should not include roads of only local significance.

2.3   Generally speaking, a trunk road will demonstrate some of the following characteristics:

- linking the main centres of population;
- facilitating access to major ports, airports and rail terminals;
- enabling access to peripheral regions; and
- providing key cross-border routes to Scotland and Wales.

2.4   The role of the SRN as a nationwide network means that these principles will be applied flexibly to reflect local conditions.

2.5   There is no requirement for roads on the SRN to have a minimum capacity, and different parts of the network face different pressures. Some roads are used predominantly by long distance traffic, while others carry a larger proportion of local traffic. Some are heavily used for freight; some run through town centres; others go through national parks. There are some roads on the SRN which do not need to be dual carriageways; indeed there are some places where a dual carriageway would be highly controversial for environmental reasons.

Q – Do you have any comments to make on the principles around which the strategic road network is defined?

Recording the SRN

2.6   The official record of the extent of the SRN is the Trunk Road Streets Gazetteer. This is maintained by the Highways Agency.

Networks within the SRN

Strategic National Corridors

2.7   Since 2005, the SRN has been divided into two parts – the national network and the regional network – to assist the system of regional funding allocations initiated by the previous government. This system has been used to explain past funding decisions.

2.8   The distinction between the two has had no effect on the daily operations of roads, but indicated where there was a particular emphasis on gaining local support before considering major investment.

2.9   From 2014, these arrangements will be replaced by a network of strategic national corridors (SNCs) that reflect key transport arteries across all modes. Roads forming part of an SNC will be known as routes of strategic national importance (RSNI). It is likely that future investment decisions will take this system into account, rather than the previous national/regional split.

2.10   The criteria for these corridors were revisited as part of a consultation in September 2010, which stated that SNCs would link two or more of the following strategic destinations, where there is evidence of substantial strategic traffic flows:[4]

- The ten largest cities in England;
- The ten busiest ports in England;
- The seven busiest airports in England; and
- Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

They will also specifically connect Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast with their respective nearest strategic urban destination (Bristol, Tyne & Wear and Merseyside).

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[4] A strategic traffic flow is defined as total or HGV traffic flows within the top 20% for GB trunk roads in England, and/or evidence of substantial strategic rail passenger or freight flows. The consultation *Revising the Strategic National Corridors* can be found at http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/closed/2010-33/

2.11 RSNI will help prioritise a subset of the SRN for the specific attention of the HA. When making decisions for future investment, the HA will continue to consider the need to avoid large-scale delay on these roads as a priority. Elsewhere, local prioritisation will play a larger role.

2.12 Generally, we consider it unlikely that the list of SNCs will be revised in the short or medium term; as the infrastructure identified within each corridor accurately represents the main routes used predominantly for national journeys between key locations. If there is a change to the strategic outlook that underpins them, it will be carried out through a consultation by the Department.

International Road Networks

2.13 UK roads form part of two international road networks:

- Trans-European Networks – Transport (TEN-T); and
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) International E-Road Network.

Both of these are predominantly focused on surface travel into, out of and through the UK, and hence are mainly focused on major ports. Major ports are already served by the SRN. We therefore believe that within the UK both of these networks should (and do) function as subsets of the SRN.

2.14 The TEN-T Network is currently being revised. The European Commission's intention is to adopt a new approach, based around key urban areas and transport links – the same principles on which the SNCs were chosen. We will therefore ensure that all SNCs form part of the revised TEN-T network.

2.15 The TEN-T network is designed to be multimodal. It includes some 'last mile' connections to ports and airports that are generally unlikely to form part of the SRN. The TEN-T network also includes links to some ports and airports that are too small to warrant connections to the SRN, meaning some roads on the TEN-T network may not form part of either the SRN or PRN.

2.16 The E-Road Network is intended to provide routes between two locations outside England, creating cross-European axes of travel. All E-Roads in England already form part of the SRN.

2.17 At the present time, there is no intention to sign either E-Roads or the TEN-T Network on the English road network.

Trunking and Detrunking

2.18 Changes to traffic or development patterns may result in changes to the optimum size of the SRN. Demographic changes, or the development of a new airport or port, may over time result in the need to add roads to the SRN. Elsewhere, the addition of new capacity in one place may remove the need for another road to remain on the SRN.

2.19 There should be a positive case for a road to be part of the SRN – no road should be a trunk road by default. Trunk roads carry special planning obligations, and including a road in the SRN will mean that local communities have less control. Unless there is a clear strategic need to retain the road on the SRN, we would prefer for the road to be under local control.

2.20 Since 1998, around one third of the then SRN has been 'detrunked' – with ownership handed over to the control of local authorities. The network as it currently stands seems to perform its functions well, and we do not anticipate any further large-scale changes. However, we are always willing to hear the case for detrunking any individual roads.

Detrunking Arrangements

2.21 In order for a road to be detrunked, the local authority and the Secretary of State will usually need to agree:

- Costs – generally, there are no immediate cost implications to detrunking a road, and no transfer payment is necessary. Maintenance funding is currently based on a formula, and will adjust automatically to reflect the total length of road for which a local authority is responsible.

- Operational arrangements – arrangements for the management of the road must be in place to ensure motorists continue to enjoy an acceptable service. For instance, if any HA technology remains on the road, arrangements must be made to fund its continued operation or to disconnect it from the HA managed network.

- Lines of demarcation – for legal purposes, it is essential that a proper line of demarcation is agreed. Generally, we would expect the HA to retain any slip roads and junctions onto the SRN, and that the boundary line will then be drawn at the first appropriate location.

2.22 Specific arrangements and points for agreement would vary, depending on the individual circumstances, and would need to be clarified in dialogue with the HA

2.23 Once negotiations have successfully concluded, the first step is usually an exchange of letters between the Secretary of State and the local authority confirming the conditions of detrunking. After this, the Department will set in train the process of issuing orders, which can take up to 40 weeks and includes a consultation period.

2.24 Individual lengths of roads may also be detrunked following improvement schemes, when there is no longer a need for the old road to form part of the SRN. Detrunking of this sort will be handled as part of the scheme (although the agreement process noted above will still apply), and may often be accompanied by a change of numbering or classification.

Trunking / Retrunking

2.25 There may be a case for including or reincorporating local roads into the SRN. Generally, we expect that the Department for Transport would initiate this process only as the result of high-level strategic decisions.

2.26 Individual local authorities may also ask the Secretary of State to assume responsibility for a particular local road. In this case, we would expect the following tests to be met:

- Strategic need – there would need to be evidence that this road performed a national-level transport function and should therefore form part of the SRN.

- Adequate condition – the transfer of the road should not impose large maintenance costs on the Agency in order to make the road safe and secure. The road should be handed over in a reasonable condition.

- Value for money – that operating the road as part of the SRN will not result in a significant escalation in day-to-day maintenance costs.

2.27 The conditions of transfer would be negotiated based on the individual circumstances of the case.

3. Primary Route Network

3.1   For medium-length journeys, the primary route network (PRN) designates routes between major settlements and port/airports across the UK. Outside the national parks, few points in England are more than ten miles from a primary route. A motorist making a regional or national journey should therefore be able to make all but the start and finish of their journey using the PRN.

3.2   Today the organisation of the PRN in Scotland and Wales is a devolved matter. It is nevertheless important that the PRN connects together to form a unified network, so cooperation remains important.

3.3   In the past, the relationship between the SRN and the PRN has not been clearly defined. Since the SRN deals with long-distance travel, we believe that the entirety of the SRN should be considered part of the PRN.

Primary Destinations

3.4   The PRN consists of roads that link two or more primary destinations, or any road on the Strategic Road Network.

3.5   The criteria for defining a primary destination are purposefully flexible. Strict criteria based on population size or traffic levels would prevent the PRN reaching more rural corners of the country. The inclusion or exclusion of individual locations from the list will therefore be a matter of official discretion. However, the decision will take into account:

- **Population** – the size of the settlement

   example Cheltenham

- **Attraction** – the amount of traffic that will come to this location

   example Stansted Airport

- **Nodes** – locations that motorists are very likely to pass through in order to get to a final destination

   example Scotch Corner

- **Density** – the number of primary destinations in the area.

example – as Stevenage is a primary destination, neither Letchworth Garden City nor Hitchin need to be.

3.6   A primary destination does not refer to a specific point on the ground. The end-point of a primary route is likely to depend on the layout of the road network. In some cases, it may also reflect a decision about what is the most important location nearby - for example, Grimsby could refer to the town or the major port. It is for the local authority to decide where the primary route should end, consulting with nearby authorities and the Highways Agency where they are affected. Onward signing should be provided where appropriate.

3.7   The proposed list for England can be found in Annex A. The Department for Transport is responsible for maintaining and updating the list.

Q – We propose to add the following locations to the list of primary destinations to represent the ten largest ports and seven largest airports in England, thereby ensuring that the PRN supports the SNCs identified in chapter two.

- Birmingham International Airport
- East Midlands Airport
- Luton Airport
- Thamesport (for Medway Ports East)
- Port of Tilbury

Do you approve of this change?

Q – Are there further locations that should be considered as primary destinations, or which should be removed from the list? Please provide evidence to support any suggestions.

Individual Primary Routes

3.8   We propose to give local authorities greater autonomy in choosing the path of individual primary routes. At present, all changes to the network must be approved by the Secretary of State. Under new arrangements, while the power to define the PRN will still officially rest with the Secretary of State, the Department will only act to approve local authority decisions and to resolve appeal cases. This will mean that local communities will finally have complete control over the primary routes in their area.

3.9 The only exception to this are roads on the SRN. These are covered by the arrangements laid out in Chapter 2, and remain the responsibility of the Secretary of State.

3.10 The following guidance is provided to aid local authorities in their decision-making, and in developing policies for dealing with the PRN in their area.

Selecting a Primary Route

3.11 Usually, there will be an obvious link from one primary destination to the next. Where there is a choice, the local authority should consider:

- The directness of the potential routes;

- The standard and capacity of the potential routes; and

- The environmental surroundings of each road.

3.12 A primary route does not need to go to the heart of the primary destination, although the local authority may continue the route into a town or city centre if they wish. If the primary route does not continue to the heart of the destination, it is recommended that further signing is provided to assist those for whom the destination represents the end of their journey. As noted above, there may be some locations where the town centre does not represent the primary destination, and signs will need to be arranged accordingly to avoid confusion for motorists.

3.13 The PRN is designed to fit together as a network, and primary routes must link up to one another. If changes are made to a route, it must still form part of a coherent and sensible network. The Department recognises that this will, in places, mean that primary routes will go through densely populated areas or sites with environmental issues.

3.14 A local authority will continue to be responsible for any costs incurred, notably the replacement of signs along the new/former primary route.

Consultation

3.15 Where a primary route crosses from one jurisdiction to another, the local authority is expected to consult other highway authorities about changes that may affect them. Where changes will have an impact on the SRN (directly or in terms of signing), or the network for the movement of abnormal loads, the local authority should first consult the HA.

Recording Primary Routes

3.16   The local highway authority is responsible for recording primary routes in their area which do not form part of the SRN. Any changes should be logged on the National Street Gazetteer, which is collectively run by local authorities.

3.17   For roads on the Strategic Road Network, all changes are logged on the Trunk Road Street Gazetteer. A full picture of changes to the PRN must be combined from these two sources.

Removing a Primary Route

3.18   A local authority may decide that there is no need for a primary route to link two destinations. In this case, the authority should be able to demonstrate either a) that direct traffic between the two locations is too low to justify a primary route; or b) that a journey of broadly similar convenience is possible through the other sections of the PRN.

Maintaining Primary Routes

3.19   Under EU Directive 89/460/EC, the PRN must provide unrestricted access to 40 tonne vehicles. Since 1989, the Department for Transport has paid for the strengthening of all bridges and other structures on the PRN to meet this standard – a programme that is now complete. Should a local authority wish to alter a primary route, it should bear the obligations of this Directive in mind. It will be the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that all infrastructure on the new primary route is of an appropriate standard.

3.20   Aside from this, there is no official maintenance standard for primary routes. However, these roads are intended to perform an important role in regional and national travel, and we generally expect that these roads will be maintained in good order for all classes of vehicle traffic.

Q – Do these guidelines accurately reflect the consideration that should go into the selection of a primary route? Is any further guidance required?

Q – Are there any further issues on the PRN that we should take into account?

Appeals

3.21   If there are disputes between local residents and a local authority over a primary route, we will expect residents to contact the local authority to

discuss the matter further. In situations where the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the Department may consider appeal cases.

3.22 The appeals procedure is not intended to challenge the status of existing primary routes, and will only apply to future changes. Nor, is it intended to challenge primary routes that have been in force for more than six months, other than in exceptional circumstances.

3.23 The Secretary of State may also exercise these powers if a local authority appears to have neglected or misused the PRN in its area, to the detriment of motorists or neighbouring authorities.

4. Road Classification

Setting road classifications

4.1 Road classifications primarily affect local people; particularly where a road has a moderate amount of traffic and travels through an urban area. It is also impractical for centrally-placed officials to take a view on the status of every road in England. Road classification is a responsibility that sits best with the local highway authority.

4.2 We expect that local authorities will design their own policies that will best reflect local conditions. However, a degree of consistency is still important, and we expect local authorities to consider the guidance that follows when designing that policy. It is also important that information is properly distributed to mapping providers and to the Department for Transport. Reporting arrangements are discussed further in the next chapter.

Principles

4.3 Roads classification exists to ensure that there is a feasible, logical road network in each area of the country. Roads classifications should be set to reflect the ways in which a community links to the wider world. It can also take into account the traffic management goals and road categorisation approach of the local authority.

4.4 There is no fixed relationship between the different classes of road in terms of traffic flow. Generally speaking, a higher class will carry more traffic; but the situation will vary greatly depending on the context. For example, a B road in the country may take considerably less traffic than a classified unnumbered road in a town centre. Similarly, there is no minimum capacity associated with any particular class of road. The system is intended to help with the distribution of traffic, not remedy its effects.

Classifying a road

4.5 The general assumption is that a road will be unclassified. Reasons for granting a higher classification include:

- The role the road plays in letting people get from one location to others;

- The volume or character of traffic that road should take;

- The traffic management objectives of the LA; and

- The standard of the road relative to other nearby roads.

4.6 What constitutes each category of road in an area will depend substantially on the local context. The exact approach taken should therefore be a local decision.[5]

4.7 In some cases it may be necessary to select one road from several broadly similar roads for a particular classification, in order to ensure that the network makes sense at a higher level.

4.8 Roads running through two or more local highway authorities should be treated in a consistent manner, and should not change classification at the boundary without a clear reason. Any changes to the classification of such roads should be agreed between the authorities involved; including those which cross into Wales or Scotland. Any proposed changes that affect junctions with the SRN should be discussed with the HA.

4.9 A local authority will continue to be responsible for any costs incurred, notably the replacement of signs along the road.

Operational questions

4.10 Local authorities may want to consider whether a road's classification should be associated with a particular standard of maintenance, or any other operational consideration. This is entirely a matter for the individual authority.

Road numbering

4.11 Numbers are allocated to A and B roads to aid motorists when navigating the network. To avoid confusion, it is important that numbers are used in a consistent fashion. To ensure this, the Department for Transport will maintain a central register of all road numbers in the England and

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[5] The SRN remains the responsibility of the Highways Agency on behalf of the Secretary of State

Wales.[6] This will reduce the risk of duplications and ensure that numbers are not reused so quickly as to cause confusion.

4.12   A road number should apply to a single route. This route can be composed of a number of different physical roads, and can change direction at junctions. Where two roads temporarily merge together (for example the A11 and the A14 in Cambridgeshire), the numbering can re-emerge at a later point. However, a numbering should only 'fork' for navigational purposes at junctions, slip roads or one way systems. In all cases, the overriding aim must be to avoid confusion for the motorist.

4.13   If a local authority wishes to create a newly numbered A or B road, they will need to contact the Department for Transport Casework team to obtain a free number. Before doing so, we recommend that the authority first considers whether a particular number would fit with existing numbers in the surrounding area. If an authority applies for a specific number, which they know to be available, it is likely that official approval will be a formality (provided that it fits with the traditional sectoral system of road numbering). Local authorities are welcome to reserve specific numbers for future use.

4.14   Some local authorities choose to number their classified unnumbered roads, and can refer to them as C roads. This has no national standing, but we recognise the right of the local authority to put in place measures to help identify a road. In the absence of a standardised national system of numbering, we advise that any local numbering is not signed.

Recording the network

4.15   The local highway authority is responsible for recording primary routes in their area. Any changes should be logged on the National Street Gazetteer.

Ensuring consistency

4.16   There is a perception that grants to local authorities for maintenance may be affected by some decisions around roads classification. This is not entirely true, and any changes would ultimately be a zero-sum game. It is nevertheless important to ensure that all local authorities behave responsibly when setting classifications.

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[6] While roads policy is a devolved matter, the English and Welsh road numbering systems are intrinsically linked. We request that Welsh LAs inform the Department of any numbering changes, to help avoid confusion. Likewise, the Department will be happy to clarify the status of any particular number for any Welsh LA, and to reserve any numbers for their use (individually or *en bloc*).

4.17 By granting more power to local authorities, the Department does not expect a radical change in the proportion of classified roads in a local authority area. If a local authority is considering a substantial revision to road classifications, which will sharply increase the length of A roads or B roads under their control, we recommend that they contact the Department beforehand to avoid any issues arising.

4.18 The Department will continue to monitor the length of different road categories in each local authority area in order to prevent abuse, and reserves the right to intervene on behalf of the Secretary of State should concerns arise.

Appeals

4.19 Local residents may question changes made to the classification of a road. In this case, in the first instance we will expect residents to write to their council to discuss the decision. The local authority should explain why the decision has been taken, and how it fits with the authority's own policy.

4.20 If this does not resolve the issue, local residents may appeal the matter to the Department for Transport. The Department, on behalf of the Secretary of State, may provide a final ruling.

4.21 The appeals procedure is <u>not</u> intended to challenge the status of existing classifications. These have been set over many decades, and local authorities may be unable to justify the classification of every road in their jurisdiction. Nor, is it intended to act as an automatic process for every classification change that a local authority implements. Nor should it be applied to classifications that have been in effect for more than six months, other than in exceptional circumstances.

4.22 The Secretary of State may also exercise their statutory powers if a local authority appears to have misused its roads classification powers, to the detriment of motorists or neighbouring authorities.

Q – Has the Department provided sufficient guidance to allow local authorities to develop their own roads classification policy?

Q – Will this guidance ensure a sufficiently consistent picture across the nation?

Q – Would this guidance give a member of the public sufficient information to understand the process of roads classification?

Q – Are there further issues on roads classification that we should consider?

5. Data

5.1 Information on the road network is useful for two different reasons:

- It helps road users to navigate the road network; and

- It helps officials, statisticians and researchers to monitor and manage the network, calculate carbon emissions and understand transport problems like congestion or safety.

For the sake of both road users and officials, it is essential that there are good arrangements in place for updating and validating the network.

Existing process

5.2 At present, the Casework Team of the Government Office Network is responsible for forwarding any requests for changes to the network to the Department for Transport, for it to officially approve on behalf of the Secretary of State. The Department also maintains a record of the extant sections of the PRN, and also a list of existing A roads (known for this purpose as the major road network).

5.3 The Casework Team informs Ordnance Survey of any changes, and Ordnance Survey in turn input the revised routes into its products.

5.4 The Department for Transport are notified of changes using one of the following Section 12 Roads forms-

- Classification of highways/ Existing Highway- Form Road 352

- Classification of highways/ Proposed Highway- Form Road 353

- Reclassification of highways/Existing Highway-Form Road 354

- Classification of highways/Proposed Highway-Form Road 355

- Declassification of highways/Existing Highway-Form Road 356

- Approval of Variation (Addition)- Form Road 826

- Approval of Variation (Deletion) – Form Road 827

- Form for notifying Strategic Roads Division (RRU)

Future process

5.5 The Department for Transport has to hold accurate data about the road network, including information on road categorisation and lengths. This is used for:

- The monitoring of carbon emissions for road transport in England;
- The calculation of measures of congestion on the road network;
- The calculation of annual average daily traffic flows;
- The distribution of some maintenance funding; and
- The provision of international comparison data.

5.6 If responsibility for primary routes and roads classification is passed to LAs, then the Department for Transport will still require notification of all changes in a standardised format.

5.7 DfT proposes that the aforementioned Section 12 notification forms are merged into one form which captures all key data elements required by the Department for Transport. The information captured by the form would consist of:

- Nature of the change to the network;
- Change to PRN;
- Road category before & after change;
- Route number before & after change;
- Description of road;
- Length;
- OS grid reference;
- Map; and
- Local authority document references.

Notification

5.8 The local authority must make a formal record of any changes and updates their own maps. These audit documents should be referred to in the notification form so that all parties have a consistent point of reference for the change.

5.9 The local authority must send formal notification to:

- The Department for Transport's Statistics Roads and Freight Division; and

- Ordnance Survey.

(The Department will maintain an up-to-date list of specific contacts on its website).

5.10 All authorities are already obliged to contribute to the National Street Gazetteer, and many have chosen to use this to record the classification of a stretch of road. Under the new system, the National Streetwork Gazetteer would act as the official record for changes of classification or PRN status.

Validation

5.11 As mentioned the information held by each local authority on the network is an important evidence base for a number of purposes. In order to achieve this goal, the Department needs to ensure precision about the:

- exact length of road in use;

- status of different sections; and

- specific layout and status of junctions, sliproads, etc.

5.12 The change form provided by each local authority will be used to inform the annual consultation process with LAs, known as the R199b. Geospatial analysts and statisticians validate the data provided to ensure that it accurately represents the underlying road network.

5.13 For this reason it is essential that the local authority provide and maintain accurate records of changes to the network, in line with the key data items detailed above.

Q – Do these reporting arrangements ensure that all interest parties will receive update information where required?

Q - Will these reporting arrangements simplify reporting for local authorities?

6. Satellite Navigation

6.1   The greatest development in route navigation over the past forty years has been the introduction of satellite navigation ('satnav') technology for ordinary motorists. Whereas previously motorists would derive their own route to or from a location, based on information displayed visually on maps, nowadays an increasing number of motorists rely upon automated directions from a portable electronic device.

6.2   This represents a considerable opportunity for those involved in roads management and policy. Satnav provides an opportunity to provide real-time traffic information to vehicles on the move; it can provide warnings about journey disruptions and allow motorists to circumnavigate them without knowing it.

6.3   This technology has grown up largely without the involvement of transport officials. However, we are aware that there may be considerable opportunities for the private and the public sector to support one another.

'Misdirection' by Satnav devices

6.4   Some communities have expressed concern that satellite navigation technology is directing traffic down unsuitable routes. This can be the fault of individual motorists, particularly domestic and international HGV drivers who use navigation systems intended for regular cars. It may also reflect unavoidable realities in the local road network. However, there may be situations when communities or local authorities wish to report a genuine failing in satnav direction.

6.5   Satnav systems work using information on a database produced by a mapping company. This is then processed by an algorithm, which seeks to find the most efficient route from the current location to the destination. Generally, it does not rely on road classifications, the PRN or the SRN; and changes to these arrangements will not affect the routes chosen by satnav devices.

6.6   The two main mapping companies (Navteq and TomTom/Teleatlas) both offer a feature on their websites through which the public can report a route which seems to be mishandled. These companies provide

information in turn to the companies that sell satnav devices, so a change made by these companies should ultimately work through to the individual satnav user. However, the update process may take several weeks or months to complete.

6.7   It must be stressed that neither the Department nor individual local authorities have any direct power over the routing of satnav devices. The reclassification of a road will not alter the way in which a satnav device works. Any conflict between satnav and classification is likely to confuse motorists and worsen safety.

6.8   More generally, it is important that traffic signs and satnav directions present as consistent a picture as possible. Confusion risks worsening the safety of motorists, and counterintuitive signs should be avoided. While some communities may be frustrated by environmental problems from traffic, none would want to see a rise in local traffic accidents. Safety and simplicity must remain the driving principles of sign layout.

Q – Are there any cost-neutral ways in which central or local government can better engage with satnav companies?

What will happen next

A summary of responses, including the next steps will be published in Summer 2011 on www.dft.gov.uk.

The Consultation criteria

The consultation is being conducted in line with the Government's Code or Practice on Consultation. A full version of the Code of Practice on Consultation is available on the Better Regulation Executive web-site at:

http://www.bis.gov.uk/files/file47158.pdf

If you consider that this consultation does not comply with the criteria or have comments about the consultation process please contact:

Giada Covallero
Consultation Co-Ordinator
Department for Transport
Zone 2/25
Great Minster House
London SW1P 4DR

Email address consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Appendix A – terminology

Road types - official

Strategic Road Network (SRN) – nationally significant roads used for the distribution of goods and services, and a network for the travelling public. In legal terms, it can be defined as those roads which are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport. It is managed by the Highways Agency. Any road on the SRN is known as a **trunk road**.

>The SRN is currently divided into the **national network** and the **regional network**, a distinction created to help support the Regional Funding Allocation system.

>From 2014, this arrangement will be replaced by a framework of **Strategic National Corridors (SNCs)**. Individual roads in the SNCs will be known as **Routes of Strategic National Importance (RSNI)**.

Primary Road Network (PRN) – roads used for transport on a regional or county level, or for feeding in to the SRN for longer journeys. Defined as roads that provide the most satisfactory route between places of traffic importance. The PRN includes the entirety of the strategic road network, and is composed of A roads and motorways only. A roads on the PRN are coloured green on most maps, as opposed to the red of ordinary A roads.

>The PRN is constructed around a series of **primary destinations** – significant locations that are likely to attract traffic. A road on the PRN is known as a **primary route**.

A Road – highest class of classified road, and top tier of the roads classification system. They are identified by the local highway authority (where they are not in the SRN) and approved by the Secretary of State. Each A road is given a unique identifying number from a list maintained by the Department for Transport.

>All sections of the strategic road network and primary route network which are not classified as motorways are classified as A roads.

B Road – second tier in the classified road system. Identified by the local highway authority and approved by the Secretary of State. Each B road is given a unique identifying number from a list maintained by central government.

Classified Unnumbered Road – third class of classified road, and a tier in the roads classification system. Identified by the local highway authority and approved by the Secretary of State. No number is officially associated with a classified unnumbered road, although the local highway authority is entitled to develop its own methods to identify it.

Unclassified Road – fourth and lowest class of classified road in the classification system. If not stated otherwise, roads are assumed to be unclassified. The local highway authority may downgrade a road to unclassified with the approval of the Secretary of State. No number is officially associated with an unclassified road, although the local highway authority is entitled to develop its own methods to identify it.

Special Road – A road on which certain types of traffic are prohibited, under the Highways Act 1980. All motorways are Special Roads, together with some high-grade dual carriageways.

Principal Road – A category of road identified in the Highways Act 1980, consisting of all A roads and motorways. This term is now largely unused except in legislation.

Secondary Road – Roads that are not Principal Roads – ie B roads, classified unnumbered roads and unclassified roads.

Road types - unofficial

C road – another term for a classified unnumbered road. Any numbering system around C roads is peculiar to the local authority and is not coordinated on a national basis; as a result, we advise that it is not displayed.

D road – another term for an unclassified road. Any numbering system around D roads is peculiar to the local authority and is not coordinated on a national basis; as a result, we advise that it is not displayed.

Major roads – generally defined as consisting of all A roads and motorways, although no consistent definition exists.

Minor roads – no consistent term exists, but can describe:
    a) all roads that are not major roads;

b) roads on an Ordnance Survey map that perform a function similar to classified unnumbered roads; or
c) the sum total of all classified unnumbered and unclassified roads – i.e. all roads which do not have a national number associated with them.

Other terms

Detrunking - the process of transferring a road from the control of the Secretary of State to a local authority.

Highways Agency (HA) – an executive agency of the Department for Transport, responsible for managing the SRN in England on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Local Highway Authority (LHA) – the owner of adopted roads in a given area, with legal obligations with regard to maintenance and management. In England, depending on the roads in question, this will be either the county council, the unitary authority, the metropolitan district council, the London borough or Transport for London. The LHA is not responsible for the SRN, as this is owned by the Secretary of State for Transport and operated by the Highways Agency (known in this context as the National Authority), which performs the functions that would elsewhere be carried out by the LHA.

Ordnance Survey – UK's national mapping agency.

European Commission Trans-European Transport Networks in Europe (EU TEN-T) - transport infrastructure for the mobility of people and goods and for the territorial cohesion of the European Union.

EU United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE) – is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations.

National Street Gazetteer – a database of all streets in England and Wales compiled from the responsible local highway authorities.

Annex A – Proposed List of Primary Destinations

Arranged by Ceremonial County		
Bedfordshire Bedford Dunstable **Berkshire** Bracknell Maidenhead Newbury Reading Slough **Bristol** Bristol **Buckinghamshire** Amersham Aylesbury Beaconsfield High Wycombe Milton Keynes **Cambridgeshire** Cambridge Ely Huntingdon Peterborough Wisbech **Cheshire** Chester Congleton Crewe Ellesmere Port Macclesfield Nantwich Northwich	Runcorn Warrington Widnes **Cornwall** Bodmin Bude Falmouth Helston Launceston Liskeard Newquay Penzance Redruth St Austell Tavistock Truro Wadebridge **County Durham** Bishop Auckland Consett Darlington Durham Hartlepool Stockton Teesside **Cumbria** Barrow-in-Furness Carlisle Kendal Keswick Kirkby Lonsdale Penrith	Whitehaven Windermere **Derbyshire** Ashbourne Buxton Chesterfield Derby Matlock **Devon** Barnstaple Bideford Exeter Exmouth Honiton Okehampton Paignton Plymouth Torquay **Dorset** Blandford Bournemouth Dorchester Poole Weymouth **East Riding of Yorkshire** Bridlington Brough Hull Humber Bridge

East Sussex
Brighton
Eastbourne
Hastings
Lewes
Newhaven
Uckfield

Essex
Basildon
Chelmsford
Clacton
Colchester
Dartford Crossing
Harlow
Harwich
Port of Tilbury
Southend
Stansted Airport

Gloucestershire
Cheltenham
Cirencester
Gloucester

Greater London
(NB. Primary destinations in
Greater London, other than
Heathrow Airport, are usually
only signed within the boundary
of the M25)
Barking
Bexleyheath
Brent Cross
Brixton
Bromley
Central London
Clapham Junction
Croydon
Dalston
Docklands
Ealing
Enfield
Hammersmith
Harrow
Heathrow Airport
Holloway
Hounslow

Ilford
Kilburn
Kingston
Lewisham
London
Peckham
Richmond
Romford
Stratford
Sutton
The City
Uxbridge
Walthamstow
Wembley
West End
Westminster
Wimbledon
Wood Green
Woolwich

Greater Manchester
Altrincham
Ashton-under-Lyne
Bolton
Bury
Leigh
Manchester
Manchester Airport
Oldham
Rochdale
Salford
Stockport
Trafford Park

Hampshire
Andover
Basingstoke
Fareham
Petersfield
Portsmouth
Ringwood
Southampton
Winchester

Herefordshire
Hereford
Leominster
Ross-on-Wye

Hertfordshire
Hemel Hempstead
Hertford
Luton
Luton Airport
St Albans
Stevenage
Watford

Kent
Ashford
Canterbury
Channel Tunnel
Dartford Crossing
Dover
Folkestone
Maidstone
Margate
Ramsgate
Sevenoaks
Sheerness
Thamesport
Tunbridge Wells

Lancashire
Blackburn
Blackpool
Burnley
Clitheroe
Fleetwood
Heysham
Lancaster
Morecambe
Preston
Skelmersdale
Wigan

Leicestershire
East Midlands Airport
Hinckley
Leicester
Loughborough
Market Harborough
Melton Mowbray

Lincolnshire
Boston
Gainsborough
Goole
Grantham
Grimsby
Humber Bridge
Immingham
Lincoln
Newark
Scunthorpe
Skegness
Sleaford
Spalding
Stamford

Merseyside
Birkenhead
Bootle
Garston
Huyton
Liverpool
Southport
Speke
St Helens
Wallasey

Norfolk
Cromer
Diss
Downham Market
Great Yarmouth
King's Lynn
Norwich
Swaffham
Thetford

North Yorkshire
Harrogate
Middlesbrough
Ripon
Scarborough
Scotch Corner
Selby
Stockton
Skipton
Thirsk
Whitby
York

Northamptonshire
Corby
Kettering
Northampton
Wellingborough

Northumberland
Alnwick
Ashington
Berwick-upon-Tweed
Corbridge
Hexham
Morpeth

Nottinghamshire
Mansfield
Nottingham
Worksop

Oxfordshire
Banbury
Oxford

Rutland
Oakham

Shropshire
Bridgnorth
Oswestry
Shrewsbury
Telford
Whitchurch

Somerset
Bath
Bridgwater
Frome
Glastonbury
Shepton Mallet
Taunton
Weston-super-Mare
Yeovil

South Yorkshire
Barnsley
Doncaster
Rotherham
Sheffield

Staffordshire
Burton-upon-Trent
Cannock
Leek
Lichfield
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Rugeley
Stafford
Stoke-on-Trent
Stone
Tamworth
Uttoxeter

Suffolk
Beccles
Bury St Edmunds
Felixstowe
Ipswich
Lowestoft
Newmarket
Sudbury

Surrey
Dorking
Farnham
Guildford
Reigate
Staines

Tyne & Wear
Gateshead
Newcastle
South Shields
Sunderland
Tyne Tunnel
Tynemouth

Warwickshire
Leamington Spa
Nuneaton
Rugby
Stratford-upon-Avon
Warwick

West Midlands
Birmingham
Birmingham International
    Airport
Brownhills
Coventry
Dudley
Solihull
Stourbridge
Walsall
West Bromwich
Wolverhampton

West Sussex
Bognor Regis
Chichester
Crawley
East Grinstead
Gatwick Airport
Horsham
Worthing

West Yorkshire
Bradford
Dewsbury
Halifax
Huddersfield
Keighley
Leeds
Pontefract
Wakefield
Wetherby

Wiltshire
Chippenham
Marlborough
Salisbury
Swindon
Trowbridge
Warminster

Worcestershire
Bromsgrove
Evesham
Kidderminster
Redditch
Worcester