Agenda Item 7

REGIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM - 1ST July 2011

UPDATE ON THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT’S WORK RELATED TO
ROUTE GUIDANCE AND DRIVER INFORMATION.

Report by: Lee Sambrook, Head of South East and East Sub-National
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Purpose of Report:
- This report was requested at the 11 March 2011 Regional Transport
Forum meeting following a discussion on the Department for Transport’s
consultation on Road Network Policy. The DfT undertook to report back to
the Forum on the work being undertaken by DfT in relation to in-vehicle
Satellite Navigation.

Recommendation:
- To note the report.

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update on a number of work areas related to route
guidance and driver information systems.

1.2 Whilst DfT and its agencies have a broad interest in travel planning and
driver information issues, the Department does not specifically regulate
SatNav devices. The Department does offer advice and guidance but it is
for the market to develop the technology.

2. Update on the Road Network Policy Consultation

2.1 The Road Network Policy Consultation was conducted in the three months
to 1ST May 2011. The consultation paper included a section on SatNavs and
sought to identify cost-neutral ways to improve coordination between
SatNav companies and local or central government. DfT is now preparing a
response, which we hope to publish in the summer.

2.2 An early sift of the results suggests that there is an appetite for better
communication between local authorities and SatNav companies; however,
the form of that communication may require further development.

3. SatNav Technology and the Highways Agency

3.1 The Highways Agency (HA) is working closely with leading SatNav service
providers to ensure the information they provide to their users is as
accurate as possible in order to assist the public in making informed
decisions about their journeys.

3.2 The HA has made access to their traffic data freely available including
details of incidents (e.g. time, location, anticipated delay and remaining
capacity); Variable Message Sign and Matrix Signal settings; and speeds,
flows and journey times for the HA’s network of motorways and trunk roads.
3.3 Research indicates that, rather than piecing together information from a variety of sources, customers want whole journey information provided in a single convenient format accessible whilst they are on the move. If it can be delivered safely (for example without distracting drivers) in-vehicle information systems might provide an opportunity to reach a wider audience and the HA’s belief is that, by integrating their data within third party commercial services, they can contribute to delivering better informed journeys and a better managed driving environment.

3.4 Most SatNav systems are designed for cars but systems specifically for HGVs/freight (or which include HGV friendly information like width, weight and height restrictions) are becoming increasingly available in the commercial marketplace.

4. SatNavs and HGVs

4.1 No assessment has been made by DfT of the potential for SatNav systems to increase the proportion of journeys undertaken by haulage companies using major routes.

4.2 It is for hauliers to plan their routes effectively. Also it is for the satellite navigation system suppliers to provide technology that is fit for purpose for appropriate routing.

4.3 It is in the haulage industry’s interests that their vehicles travel by the quickest route, which is almost always a major route.

4.4 There are new SatNav systems specifically for hauliers, which include software to ensure that hauliers stay on their routes and should help alleviate the problem of lorries using unsuitable roads as it rolls out.

4.5 Local authorities have the powers to make weight restrictions if necessary.

4.6 DfT Freight Best Practice programme has provided general information to HGV operators to help improve efficiency. For example, this includes a Guide to Telematics – which describes technologies including SatNav systems and offers advice on selecting types of product/system. DfT funding for the Freight Best Practice programme ended on 31 March 2011. However, the existing publications will remain available for use by the industry.

5. East of England Transport Information study

5.1 The DfT understand Professor Peter Landshoff is working with BT looking at smart phone-type applications by providing historic and live traffic information to aid driver journey planning. The work is looking specifically at the A12 and A14 which have particular challenges.

5.2 Although DfT is not directly involved in the study, HA representatives have been involved and have provided relevant sample traffic flow/speed data to Professor Landshoff.

5.3 HA have also been involved in the study’s work on the potential for technology to improve incident and event management by facilitating
communications between stakeholders such as the Police and local councils.

5.4 The HA are interested in using technology to ensure the correct deployment of resources (Police/Traffic Officers, Incident Support Units) at the start of an incident and accurate and timely communication between the Traffic Officer Service and local authorities e.g. on the availability of diversion routes and mutual sign setting.

6. SatNavs and Road Safety

6.1 The Department recognises that well-designed and correctly-used route guidance systems have the potential to reduce congestion and improve safety on the road but if the routing information is not well presented these systems could have an adverse effect.

6.2 SatNav directional information is only ever advisory. Drivers, including HGV drivers, are responsible for ensuring that any route followed is legal and suitable for their vehicle. They must obey road signs indicating that their vehicles must not use certain roads, bridges or tunnels. Instructions from a SatNav do not override this responsibility and failure to drive with due care and attention is an offence, liable to prosecution. The advice also mentions that users need – in the same way as users of paper maps – to up-date mapping information on a regular basis. As standard practice, SatNav providers offer updates, but it is for the users to take action on this.

6.3 Local authorities with concerns about the possible omission of width, weight or height restrictions from SatNav mapping may inform the companies responsible for producing and maintaining the digital maps used by the vast majority of satellite navigation devices. Whilst many companies provide route guidance devices, there are two main digital mapping companies covering Europe: TeleAtlas and Navteq. Their websites are at www.teleatlas.com and www.navteq.com respectively, and both websites have the facility to report map changes.

6.4 In 2006 Transport Research Laboratory (TRL in Crowthorne) developed principles for safe and appropriate navigation system routing. These principles were converted into a technical checklist to assist designers. The report and checklist, Routing Assessment of Dynamic Route Guidance Systems, PPR093, are available on TRL’s website: http://www.trl.co.uk/default.htm

6.5 It was also recognised that route guidance systems should provide information in a clear, non-distracting way and that controls should be operated without taking the driver’s attention away from the road. The European Commission has published the European Statement of Principles on human-machine interface which outline recommended good practice on the ergonomic design of information systems available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:216:0001:0042:EN:PDF

6.6 The Department supported a TRL project to revise and update a checklist which can be used to assess systems against the European Statement of
Principles. This checklist could in future support an independent assessment of route guidance systems by the industry or consumer groups. We expect the report, *Revision of the Checklist for the Assessment of In-Vehicle Information Systems*, to be published on TRL’s website in the near future.

7. **Other vehicle to infrastructure communication technology**

7.1 Further advances in in-vehicle technology could dramatically change the way information and safety features are provided to drivers, by enabling communications between vehicles and the road infrastructure. The Highways Agency is monitoring developments in these technologies and exploring how they might be facilitated on the strategic road network.

7.2 The Highways Agency held an industry day on 3rd March 2011 to explore with industry stakeholders what more is needed from the HA to help develop the market for in-vehicle systems that assist drivers as they make their journeys. The HA is currently considering the responses.

8. **Speed Limit Database**

8.1 The DfT has developed a first version of a Speed Limit Data Collection and Transfer Format Specification (data schema) which is being piloted.