

Ivinghoe Freight Zone – Explanation April 2023

The purpose of the Freight Zone is to restrict HGV access to the area. Those HGVs that DO NOT have a business reason to be there, entering the area as a cut-through to somewhere else will be in breach of the order. This traffic should be encouraged to follow more suitable roads around the zone. HGVs for businesses based within the zone and trucks entering the zone to service commercial and residential properties in the zone will have exception and be allowed.

The result of surveys made during the last few years indicate that the majority of HGVs are using this part of Buckinghamshire as a cut through to other parts of the UK.

Phase 1 covers the installation of signage around the zone making the 7.5 tonne environmental traffic regulation order restricting HGV traffic with exception for local access legal. This started in February and is now complete.

Phase 2 which covers the more bespoke advance notice signage on key routes around the zone, including Central Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, to alert drivers and operators about the restriction enabling them to avoid breaching the order and follow the more appropriate routes is continuing and I will update when more concrete details are available.

A further traffic survey will be conducted to measure the change in flows around one month after the phase 2 install. The data captured will help measure the effectiveness of the zone and impact on the preferred routes around the area. The results of the post implementation surveys will be shared with local members, parish councils and the public. It must not be forgotten that the Ivinghoe scheme is first intervention of this type within Buckinghamshire and as such there is no previous experience to utilise.

Who will enforce?

Currently powers for the enforcement of traffic regulation orders (TROs) sit with the police and the trading standards, the latter not actually having powers to stop vehicles.

Under the Traffic Management Act (2022), Part VI it was enabled so that local authorities outside of London may have powers to enforce certain moving traffic offences. The council is presently introducing the first batch of locations for enforcement of Moving Traffic Offences. Requests for future locations can be made through the council website. All locations and associated processes do have to be approved by the Secretary of State for Transport.

How will enforcement be implemented ?

The priorities for TVP and Trading Standards have not changed, being 'crimes against the person' and 'protecting the vulnerable'; Local Authority capability to offer effective moving traffic enforcement is some way off. As a result it was suggested that the communities could make use of sending letters of guidance to operators

observed in the zone. These letters would advise of the potential breach of the order, the risk of prosecution and encourage the use of more appropriate routes around the area. This approach was devised taking advantage of experiences from Central Beds who suggested results in excess of 80% compliance without legal enforcement measures.

A process of enforcement similar to the 'speedwatch' lines is envisaged and expected to evolve over the next 2 years. It will be wrong to expect an immediate change in the traffic flows, not only will the HGV drivers need to become acquainted the zone signage and alternative routes but also, devices such as 'in-cab navigation aids' and maps will require updates.

What will be the penalties ?

The maximum fine for breach of a traffic regulation order is £1,000. The police are able to enforce by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice of £50. Based on what has been observed in Oxfordshire where they have an existing Structural TRO for the medieval Newbridge. They operate the use of warning letters. In a number of cases things can escalate to a prosecution through the Magistrates Court though fines are paid to the civic purse and costs allocated to the prosecuting authority. These don't cover the real costs so every prosecution is expensive.

Will the police be involved/active ?

The police are able to enforce these TROs but given their priorities and the fact that for these zonal orders they would have to see a vehicle enter the restricted area, follow it till it leaves the zone; if it doesn't stop they can pull the vehicle over and prosecute the driver, getting police support will be a challenge.

At the moment we are in no-mans land (Pilot Scheme!); we need the LA (local Authority) enforcement of moving traffic offences to offer the solution but (Bucks Council) have to get all locations and detailed plans approved by the Secretary of State these can only submit twice a year.

Derek J Town - Buckinghamshire Council - Ivinghoe Ward.