

CORNWALL COUNCIL

Response to:

Road Works: Reducing disruption on Local 'A' Roads

The following is Cornwall Council's response to the consultation questions set out in the above document. We have answered questions in our capacity as the local highway authority and traffic management authority for Cornwall but also as a work promoter for highway works on the local highway network.

As will be seen from the following, whilst we agree with the principles and aims which lie behind the proposals, we believe that appropriate mechanisms and powers already exist under the auspices of the Traffic Management Act (TMA), the New Roads and Streetworks Act (NRSWA) and the duty to co-ordinate Streetworks in the LHA's capacity as the Streetworks Authority. The TMA already places a duty on the authority to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic and, given the large influx of visitors to Cornwall in the summer, we have for many years operated a system of embargoes and collaborative working practices which to a large extent have avoided the disruption which this consultation seeks to manage.

We also believe that to concentrate on local 'A' roads does not take account of the dynamic nature of traffic growth. The road classification system is largely historical and is, to some extent, a rather poor indicator of sensitivity to disruption caused by roadworks. When the concept of maintenance hierarchy was introduced by "Well Maintained Highways" the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance in 2004 an analysis of the Cornish local 'A' Road network showed that only 40% of our network had the flows normally assumed for an 'A' road.

In setting up our hierarchy we therefore subdivided 'A' roads into two categories; 2a & 2b with 2a being the 40% and 2b the remainder. This distribution is not uncommon in rural areas and is the reason why we state that if the requirements set out in this consultation are implemented then discretion should be given to LHA's to exempt certain roads. In any case a combination of an appropriately defined and managed traffic sensitive network, holiday embargoes and proactive management by LHA traffic and streetworks teams will, in most circumstances, achieve the desired effect. A copy of our current embargo dates is appended and our traffic sensitive network is available on our website at the following link - <https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/>. The second appendix gives navigation instruction within the mapping tool.

Andy Stevenson

Highways and Drainage Manager
CORNWALL Council

Question 1: As a road user, do you support the aims of these proposals?

Comments:

Broadly speaking we agree with the principles which lie behind the consultation. However, we believe that the vast majority of situations can be adequately dealt with by making better use of existing powers and regulations under the Traffic Management Act.

Question 2: Do you have any suggestions about how those carrying out the works could communicate better with road users to minimise delays and frustration? Please give examples.

Comments:

When we undertake works in Cornwall which are likely to be the cause of disruption we use a wide range of mechanisms including press releases, radio interviews, public engagement sessions (where appropriate). Additionally we always endeavour to make use of VMS on key approaches to works, particularly at logical diversion/alternative route junctions. We also make this a requirement for other works promoters operating on our network.

Question 3: For works' promoters (authorities and utilities), please specify the annual number of works in each category carried out by or for your organisation below. The total of your answers to e, f and g should match your answer to c.

CORNWALL COUNCIL as Highway Authority/Works Promoter						
	Major	Standard	Minor	Immediate-emergency	Immediate-urgent	Total
a. How many works in total do you carry out on local roads?	981	320	567	172	0	2040
b. From your answer to a) How many works are in the	147	107	191	37	0	482
c. From your answer to b) How many works span one or	0	0	0	0	0	0
d. From your answer to c), how many deploy temporary traffic lights (portable traffic signals)?	0	0	0	0	0	0
e. From your answer to c), how many sites do you estimate you would clear at weekends?	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
f. From your answer to c), at how many sites do you estimate you would continue	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
g. From your answer to c), at how many works could you re-schedule to avoid weekends?	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a

Question 4: Please tell us the average daily cost for a work gang at minor, standard and major works? (We recognise that larger scale works may require more manpower).

Comments:

Minor - £500

Standard - £1500

Major - £2000

*The above relates purely to cost of one gang and their associate equipment. Major surfacing works will be of the order of double this cost.

Question 5: Please tell us what the percentage uplift on labour costs might be for working a) Saturday and b) Sunday?

Comments:

Our current working arrangements generally attract an uplift of 25% for weekend working.

Question 6: What other costs would be incurred by working at weekends? Please give values if you can. Please also tell us if there may be ways of reducing or avoiding these costs.

Comments:

Material suppliers such as quarries and concrete plants will charge extra for weekend working. In addition there may well be planning constraints which prohibit their operation on weekends. We do not believe there to be any way to avoid additional charges for weekends.

Question 7: How long would it typically take to return a site to traffic on a Friday, and re-install it on a Monday for each of major, standard and minor works? Please provide costs if you can.

Comments:

Difficult to quantify, however, as this is standard practice in Cornwall we do not envisage this to have a significant impact on our costs.

Question 8: Is there anything preventing all minor works being started and finished during Monday - Friday?

Comments:

We do not envisage this to be particularly problematic as virtually all our works are carried out under this arrangement.

Question 9: Do you agree that works' promoters could be required to self-report that they have complied with the weekend requirements by providing timed photographic evidence?

Comments:

We agree and can see no reasonable argument for not doing so.

Question 10: Please tell us how you would deal with any costs that might be incurred from these proposals. Please provide any estimates of costs and impacts.

Comments:

We would have to absorb this in the works budget and this would merely reduce the number of schemes that can be delivered from an already over stretched budget.

Question 11: Do you think we should set charges on the same basis as over-run charges that are intended to reflect the cost of congestion caused, or is there another basis that would be more effective?

Comments:

Yes – Section 74 of NRSWA sets out a scale of charges and we would suggest that this is by far the easiest mechanism to adopt as it is already well understood and in common usage.

Question 12: For local authorities, if you have it, please provide data on the cost of congestion for the 'A' roads in your area, by day of the week if possible.

Comments:

No figures available

Question 13: Do you think that local authorities should be able to remove the new requirements in relation to works carried out on specific roads if they think that local considerations make them unnecessary? Please provide examples of where this may be justified.

Comments:

Yes, we do believe that Local Highway Authorities should have discretion.

In Cornwall we operate a traffic sensitive network, as set out in the Traffic Management Act; we have also adopted a maintenance hierarchy as set out in the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance (Well Maintained Highways). When taken together these two mechanisms set out those roads which we, as local highway authority, consider to be most important and sensitive to congestion. Due to the historic nature of road classification and the way in which the networks have evolved not all A Roads feature in the upper level of the hierarchy nor are they all in the most sensitive category; whereas a significant number of B,C and U Roads are in the most sensitive category.

There also needs to be discretion for those emergency and safety situations where roads are closed, or signals installed, to protect public safety due to a failure of retaining walls and embankments. Often these are complex situations to resolve requiring land negotiations, detailed structural designs and traffic management arrangements. Clearly there needs to be an exemption in such situations.

Question 14: If legislation were to set *maximum* charges, please specify in what circumstances you would use discretion to charge a lower amount

Comments:

In our operation of over-run charges under section 74 of NRSWA we have a mechanism for reducing charges where there are extenuating circumstances such as plant breakdown, road traffic accident preventing delivery, or severe weather that has prevented completion of works as per the intended programme. As set out in our response to question 11 above, we believe that the section 74 process is well understood within the industry and should be the model for any charges in relation to this consultation.

Question 15: For highway authorities, do you agree that the works' promoters should be required to self-report the time that works have been completed and that the lights have been removed by providing timed photographic evidence?

Comments:

Yes, although there is an inherent conflict with the works stop requirement of noticing by 16.30 on the day following completion, as set out in the Traffic Management Act, which is also included as part of the ETON system, and the proposal suggested here. Some changes to the Traffic Management Act and ETON will be required in order to avoid considerable confusion and misinterpretation.

Question 16: For works' promoters, when deploying temporary traffic lights at work sites, are they installed / removed by the team that carries out the reinstatement or by a separate team or organisation? If the latter, how does it work?

Comments:

Most are carried out by a separate organization. However the liaison for the traffic management is carried out by our internal service provider (CORMAC) who undertake the noticing and booking of road space and then book the traffic signals direct with the third party TM sub-contractor. Responsibility for the arrangements rests with the organization placing the notice – in our case – CORMAC.

Question 17: For works' promoters, what is the average time taken to remove traffic lights from works once completed on 'A' roads?

Comments:

One hour.

Question 18: For works' promoters, would you need to change how you operate to satisfy the new requirements for temporary traffic lights from works on 'A' roads? Please provide examples and details of any one-off or ongoing costs.

Comments:

No real change

Question 19: Do you think that a daily charge should be set for this failure to comply, or a shorter period? If a shorter period, to what period do you think the charge should apply (e.g. 2, 4, 8 hours)?

Comments:

Daily as per section 74 type over-run charges

Question 20: As well as Saturday and Sunday, should the proposals also apply to public holidays (other than Easter Sunday and Christmas Day)?

Comments:

In line with our comments under question 13 above we believe that there should be local discretion. Cornwall is a busy tourist destination and we have for many years operated an embargo which prohibits the undertaking of works at certain times of the year. This includes all public holidays but also all school holiday periods and some additional periods as well. A copy is appended.

Question 21: It may be necessary to update the Electronic Transfer of Notices (EToN) to take account of these changes. If changes were to be made, how much would it cost your organisation to implement? (This could include licence fees, management fees, and training).

Comments:

If there is a change to the specification we assume that this would then require systems to be updated as a matter of course – We envisage the cost to be relative small, of the order of less than £10K.

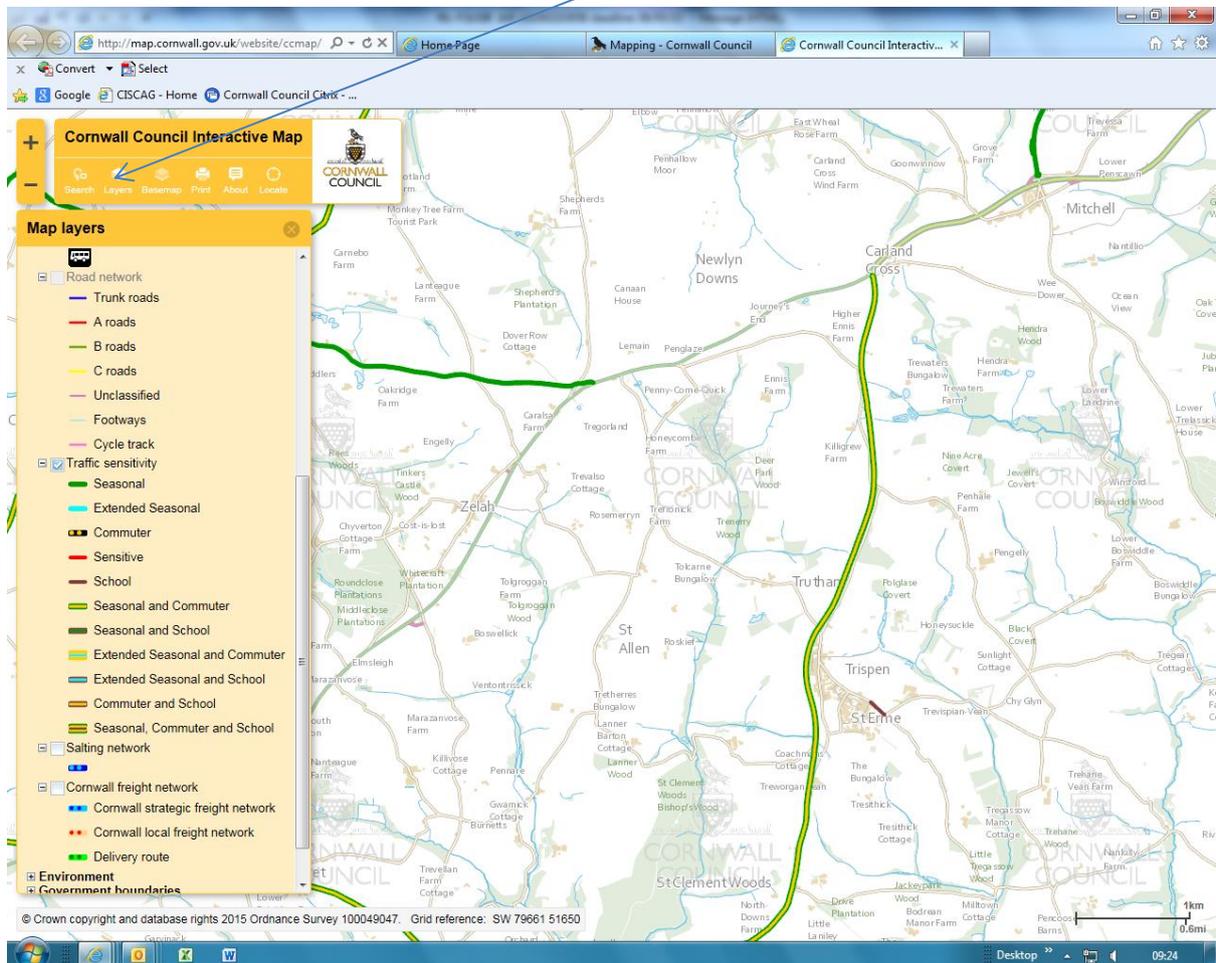
Question 22: Please tell us any other thoughts or suggestions you have on these proposals.

Comments:

We believe that there may be an unintended consequence of these proposals insofar as the requirement to clear sites may actually give rise to multiple closures and temporary signal installations as contractors use temporary re-instatements in order to meet the timescales to clear sites thus necessitating a further visit to carry out the permanent re-instatement.

CORNWALL COUNCIL – Traffic Sensitive Routes

Click on layers tab then select Transportation from list



Scroll down to Traffic Sensitivity and tick box to activate layers. Map should look like the screenshot above.



Cornwall Council

Road Embargo Dates 2016

Traffic sensitive Routes/Roads are as classified on Cornwall County's Street Gazetteer. For further information please contact the Street Works Section on 0300 1234 222 or email streetworks@cornwall.gov.uk

Note: These dates may change if subject to review.

Extended Seasonal Routes*

From 0000hrs Thurs 24th March 2016 **To** 2400hrs Sunday 30th October 2016

(Following discussion and agreement with the Street Works Section night-time working for specific sites will be permitted on weekday nights Monday to Thursday 1900 hrs to 0700hrs)

For Seasonal *

Easter Holiday

From 0000hrs Thurs 24th March 2016 **To** 2400hrs Sunday 10th April 2016

May Day Holiday

From 0000hrs Friday 29th April 2016 **To** 2400hrs Monday 2nd May 2016

Spring Bank Holiday

From 0000hrs Friday 27th May 2016 **To** 2400hrs Sunday 5th June 2016

Full Summer

From 0000hrs Friday 22nd July 2016 **To** 2400hrs Sunday 4th September 2016

* Following discussion and agreement with the Street Works Section night-time working for specific sites may be permitted on weekday nights Monday to Thursday 1900 hrs to 0700hrs

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