



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Traffic Sensitive Streets Review July 2025 - Consultation

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Foreword

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) Traffic Sensitive Street Review has been conducted in line with the requirements of the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) 1991 (Section 64), NRSWA 1991 code of practice (Section 5.4) and GeoPlace Traffic Sensitive Streets Guidance Note 2.0 (2023)

Introduction

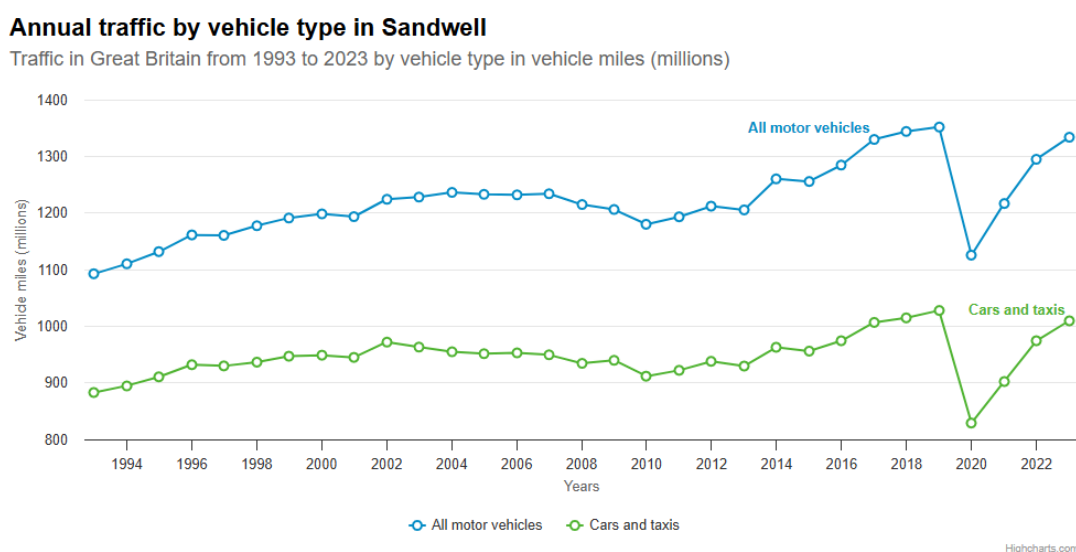
Local Highway Authorities are required to undertake periodic reviews of the traffic sensitive street designations within their area, to ensure the designations continue to meet the current criteria and best practice. The Code of Practice for the co-ordination of street works and works for road purposes and related matters (March 2023), requires local highway authorities to review their traffic sensitive street designations following changes to the criteria.

Sandwell MBC carried out its last review of traffic sensitive streets in 2019 as part of the implementation of its permit scheme. The Council is committed to ensuring this review updates the designations and contributes to the Councils objective of providing reliable journey times on its highway network, which is important for road users and has a wider impact on Sandwell's local economy.

The Council has a successful and constructive relationship with statutory undertakers in Sandwell. This proposal considers the removal of tourism routes and winter gritting routes as designations of traffic sensitivity.

Data provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) shows the annual traffic in Sandwell is returning to pre-pandemic levels, with over 1.33 billion vehicle miles travelled on roads in Sandwell in 2023. The data also shows the high percentage of vehicles other than cars and taxis using the boroughs highway network, with 24.3% of vehicles on the network being larger vehicles. This highlights the importance of coordinating works on Sandwell's highway network and the importance of traffic sensitive street designations to regulate works on the busiest areas of the network and support the local economy.

Figure 1. – DfT Data on Annual traffic by vehicle type in Sandwell.



(Dft.gov.uk, 2023)

The review ensures that both the Council and statutory undertakers have sight of the appropriate designations to highlight where a street or part of a street has high traffic flow or other conditions, where they can consider implementing mitigation measures to reduce disruption to highway users, these may include but are not limited to:

- Working outside of traffic sensitive times
- Manually controlling traffic signals to reduce queueing vehicles
- Using advanced signing prior to the works notifying road users of potential delays
- Using innovative technology, such as intelligent of auto-green temporary traffic signals, to reduce queueing where temporary signals are required.
- Changing methods of working to reduce carriageway incursion.

Designation Criteria

Sandwell has used the criteria set out in section 5.4.2 of the NRSWA 1991 Code of Practice and the GeoPlace Guidance Notes 2.0 (April 2023), as shown in Table 1. Below. The Council has used available data to identify where streets within the Borough meet the criteria to be designated traffic sensitive. Where data is unavailable, the Council has also identified streets that based on local knowledge, would meet the criteria to be designated as traffic sensitive. Where the Council has made these assumptions, they are recorded in the proposals with 'Agreement' as part of the criteria in the description field.

There were some streets which met the requirements to be designated as traffic sensitive, however we have taken a reasonable approach using local knowledge remove any streets where we considered the traffic sensitive designation was not required.

The authority has taken the suggested text for traffic sensitive designations released by GeoPlace and incorporated the suggested wording of the criteria as can be seen in Table 1.

A highway authority may designate certain streets (or parts of streets) as "traffic sensitive" in one of the following ways:

- Agreement with statutory undertakers known to have apparatus in the street concerned.
- One or more of the following criteria is met:

Table 1. – Traffic Sensitive Designation Criteria

Designation Code	Designation Criteria	Data Sources	Criteria
a.	The street is one on which at any time the highway authority estimates traffic flow to be greater than 500 vehicles per hour per lane of carriageway, excluding bus or cycle lanes;	Sandwell MBC local traffic count data. DfT Traffic Count Data	A – Traffic Flow - XX
b.	The street is a single carriageway two-way road, the carriageway of which is less than 6.5 metres wide, having a total traffic flow of not less than 600 vehicles per hour;	Sandwell MBC local traffic count data. DfT Traffic Count Data OS Master Map Data	B – Single Carriageway - XX
d.	Traffic flow contains more than 25% heavy commercial vehicles;	Local Knowledge	D – HGV>25%
e.	The street carries in both directions more than eight buses per hour;	Data provided by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) on bus routes within the region.	E – Buses - XX
g.	The street is within 100 metres of a critical signalised junction, gyratory or roundabout system;	Sandwell MBC Traffic Signal Data UKPMS Network Local Knowledge WM KRN Network	G - Critical Junction
h.	The street, or that part of a street, that has a pedestrian flow rate at any time of at least 1300 persons per hour per metre width of footway;	Department for Education (DfE) data on pupil numbers in schools >650 pupils Town Centres Local Knowledge	H – Pedestrian Flow – XX
Agreement	Where local knowledge has been applied to identify streets which are considered to meet the criteria, however no data is available to confirm this.	Local Knowledge	Agreement

Nb. Previous criteria: c. the street falls within a congestion charges area; f. Winter gritting route and i. Tourist / event traffic have now been removed.

Designation Timings

The Council currently has a variety of different timings and periods where its traffic sensitive streets designations apply. As part of this review, we have taken an approach to simplify the designations where possible, this will include having standard timings and a clear criterion for where they apply. There are obviously some designations relating to specific situations which will deviate from standard timings, such as outside schools, town centres and near football stadiums.

The table below provides a list of the standard timings and the criteria where they apply.

Table 2. – Proposed Timings

Criteria	Key	Timings
Streets which meet any of the criteria and are part of the West Midlands Key Route Network.	All Day	07:00 – 19:00 Working Days Only
Streets which meet any of the criteria and are not part of the West Midlands Key Route Network.	Peak Only – Morning Peak Only – Afternoon	07:00 – 09:30 15:30 – 19:00 Working Days Only
Streets outside schools which meet criteria 'H' – more than 1300 pedestrians/hour/meter of footway.	Schools – Morning Schools – Afternoon	08:30 – 09:15 15:00 – 16:00 Working Days Only/Term Time Only
Streets which meet the criteria and have specific circumstances. For example, outside sports stadiums, near large distribution centres and in town centres.	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous to account for specific situations. Town Centre Distribution Centres Shopping Centres

Comparison with Current Designations

Currently Sandwell has 826 traffic sensitive designation across 400 unique USRN's, the review has identified a reduction to 739 traffic sensitive designations across 383 unique USRN's.

The total length of our current designations is 413.62km and the review has identified 406.80km of designations, including overlapping designations with different timings/days.

As many of the designations are duplicated with different timings/days, the length of USRN's with a traffic sensitive designation is currently 268.17km or 30.68% of Sandwell's adopted highway network compared to 265.80km or around 30.41% following the review.

Whilst there was data available to designate additional streets as traffic sensitive, the Council has taken a reasonable approach to this review and removed designations on some minor roads which met the criteria, but with local knowledge it was felt these were not required. There were 844 traffic sensitive designations across 444 unique USRN's in the initial draft. This has been reduced through local knowledge to 739 designations across 383 unique USRN's.

Consultation

The guidance recommends that authorities should consult and notify the following stakeholders ahead of implementing the revised designations.

- every undertaker known to the street authority to be working in its area
- every undertaker that has given the authority notice of its intention to start working in its area
- every other local authority for the street to which the proposed designation relates
- Transport for London, where the street is in Greater London
- the chief officer of police, chief executive of fire and rescue authority, the chief executive of the National Health Service ambulance trust
- Passenger Transport Executives and other transport authorities, such as light rail operators
- any person who has submitted a written request to be given notice of a proposed designation. This may include other street authorities for example Highways England or Network Rail

The Council will hold a 30-day consultation period which will begin on the 7th July 2025 and close on the 6th August 2025.

Consultation Responses

Enquiries or objections can be raised with Sandwell MBC, and these will be reviewed, and a response provided. The Council will consider all responses and then may continue to make the designation, with or without modifications and will always act reasonably in coming to a decision.

Responses to the consultation should be sent to: Robert_Hodgson@sandwell.gov.uk

Alternatively, please post to:

Traffic Sensitive Review
Highways Services
Sandwell Council
PO Box 2374
Oldbury
B69 3DE

Please note that any objections raised or received outside of the consultation period may not be considered.