

Transport Statement

Ashover, Derbyshire

Assessment of Traffic
Survey Data

Terms of Reference

Yourlocale has been commissioned to interpret data provided to Ashover Parish Council by Derbyshire County Council. The data was collected in Autumn 2015.

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Introduction

Ashover is a large Parish (over 10,000 acres) with a relatively small population (fewer than 1,800 residents). Chesterfield lies on the A61 route a few miles to the north-east and Matlock lies a few miles to the south-west on the A6 route. The B6036 (off the A632 Chesterfield/Matlock road) is the main route into Ashover. The A632 itself, according to the DfT, carries around 10,000 vehicles per day on average. Other village roads are unclassified. Some roads are bus routes although there is a heavy reliance on the private motor car.

Like many villages and towns the highway network in Ashover has developed over many centuries (in the case of Ashover it is likely that the village has been in existence since at least the 11th Century). Until relatively recently nobody could ever have envisaged how 'traffic' and the various types of vehicle and road users would change.

The centre of the village is a conservation area and there are several key amenities and attractions such as the local school, church and community hall, a health centre, post office, shops and public houses. Numbers of people and vehicles are likely to rise significantly due to tourist visits.

Surveys

Derbyshire County Council (DCC) deployed radar units at four locations and undertook video surveys at seven locations. The equipment recorded traffic volumes, vehicle classifications and speeds. The data has been tabulated by DCC.

Traffic Volumes

According to the surveys the B6036 Hockley Lane carries, on average, 976 vehicles every 24 hours. Other roads (Hard Meadow Lane, Moor Road and Butts Road) carry an average of 972, 1127 and 1070 vehicles respectively (overall average 1056 per road per 24 hours).

Benchmarking

According to the Department for Transport's (DfT) "National Road Traffic Survey 2015" (TRA0302) minor roads in Great Britain carry an average of 1,400 vehicles per 24 hours.

There is little national data available for minor roads but the volumes seen in Ashover seem to be broadly in line with the DfT's national average.

Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's)

According to the DfT's "Road Traffic Estimates Great Britain 2014" (updated December 2015) heavy goods vehicles (all goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight) would be expected to account for just over 5% of all traffic nationally. The percentage would be lower on rural minor roads.

The data supplied by DCC shows that HGV's made up between 1.6% and 3.5% of the traffic in Ashover, the higher percentages being found on the B6036. The numbers of HGV's are consistent with national figures but, due to the narrow nature of some roads, the presence of HGV's is arguably more noticeable and can have a greater impact on the character of villages such as Ashover.

Traffic Speeds

The average speed on the B6036 Hockley lane is 41mph. On the more minor roads the speeds are between 22 and 29mph. This is likely to be due to the narrow nature of Hard Meadow Lane, with natural slowing features such as bends, and the more built-up nature of Moor Road and Butts Road. The speeds seem to be consistent with roads of such character.

Cycling (Comment Only)

The number of cycles on footways was observed during the video surveys and recorded on the data sheets. We have therefore commented.

Numbers of cyclists on footways seem relatively high (for example 64 in 12 hours on Moor Road / Malthouse Lane). The numbers riding on footways is likely to be due to the relatively narrow carriageways compared with the relatively wide footways. It is also possible that some of the cyclists are children (who are not exempt from the law but are more readily accepted when cycling on footways). No further details are known.

Technically (under the Highways Act 1835/Local Government Act 1888) cycling on footways is an offence but there is little that can be done to discourage it. The Police can issue £50 fixed penalty notices but arguably cycling should be encouraged for many reasons such as health, air quality, sustainability and congestion-relief. Unless road safety hazards are being created the most appropriate course of action could be to initially deal with any issues on an informal basis through the local PCSO, Parish Council etc.

Summary

In summary the traffic patterns (in terms both of volume and speed) in Ashover appear to be fairly typical of those in similar villages.

With a large rural area and residential development concentrated in a relatively small area, whilst there would seem to be scope for future development (in terms of traffic capacity) it would need to be carefully considered to avoid affecting the character and feel of the village. For example a large housing development could shift the 'heart' of the village and any significant commercial/industrial development might affect the character.

Conclusion

Traffic in Ashover seems generally 'normal' and in order to maintain that normality any proposed development should be carefully considered both on its own merits and on its cumulative effect on the village as a whole.

Acknowledgements

Derbyshire County Council

Department for Transport