



Dorset
AREA OF OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY
PARTNERSHIP



DORSET RURAL ROADS PROTOCOL

APRIL 2008

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Introduction

This document is structured in two parts, plus appendices.

The first part (Sections 1.00 – 3.00) is the core Dorset Rural Roads Protocol. It encompasses the Vision, Scope, Principles and Procedures underpinning the Protocol. It can be read as a 'stand alone' element.

The second part (Sections 4.00 – 8.00) is the more detailed supplementary information which supports and amplifies the Protocol.

The Appendices are references to specific aspects of the Protocol; Appendix E outlines the Plan of Actions necessary to implement the Protocol.

Further detailed guidance will be produced on specific topics identified in the Protocol.

The development of this Protocol was a Key Action of the Strategy for Air Quality and the Environment contained in the 'Dorset (excluding South East Dorset) Local Transport Plan 2006 -2011' and is the positive response to Policy TR4 of the 'Dorset AONB Management Plan 2004 – 2009'.

This Protocol carries the status of formal Policy of Dorset County Council in its capacity of Highway Authority for Dorset and of local guidance and advice in accordance with paragraph 7.26, page 124, of the 'Dorset (excluding South East Dorset) Local Transport Plan 2006 -2011'.

The Protocol is the result of the commitment by the Community Overview Committee of Dorset County Council on 29 November 2007, to *"produce an overarching document giving guidance as to how we should work to achieve the overall aims"* (4.1). The Policy Statement in Appendix 2 of the Approved Committee Report states:

"Dorset County Council will deliver its highways service in accordance with the principles given in the Rural Roads Management Protocol. All highway policy shall support the principles of the Protocol".

The document was produced by consultants Context4D and Forum HeritageServices in association with a number of working parties and theme groups, including Highway Engineers from various sections of the County Environment Directorate, officers of the Dorset and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONBs, Dorset Engineering Consultancy, Dorset Police, members of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils and the Environment Portfolio Holder for Dorset County Council.

The document "Reclaiming our Rural Highways" commissioned by the Dorset AONB Partnership in 2005, highlighted the issues identified in parts of the existing rural road environment and pointed to examples of good practice which could be adopted. Dorset County Council subsequently convened the Rural Roads Task and Finish Group to develop guidelines for this Protocol. A team led by Halcrow produced further detailed work, completed in 2007. This Protocol has addressed and drawn from these documents.

DORSET RURAL ROADS PROTOCOL

A New Approach

Dorset's rural roads and streets are an integral part of the landscape. The County has a rich environment and heritage, reflected in its many designations. Consequently, sensitive management of the road environment can make a major contribution to Dorset's environment, heritage and quality of life. This protocol sets out Dorset County Council's new approach to rural road management in the County and how it will be implemented.

THE VISION

All decisions affecting the highway environment in Dorset will ensure the conservation and enhancement of the outstanding quality of its landscape and settlements, whilst delivering a safe and convenient network for all modes of movement.

1.00 Definition and Scope

- 1.01 For the purpose of this Protocol, a rural road is any highway, classified or unclassified, which runs predominantly through the countryside and smaller freestanding settlements. Within settlements they shall be referred to as streets unless they carry "through" traffic.
- 1.02 This Protocol shall apply to all activities which will result in a physical impact on the rural road and street environment. These will include tasks of policy development, design of highway improvements, routine and structural maintenance and highway management.
- 1.03 This Protocol shall apply to work carried out by Dorset County Council, its consultants, developers, and those working on the utilities within the rural highway environment. It should be used by local communities, parish councils, amenity groups, police and highway and utility engineers working jointly with the Highway Authority.
- 1.04 The Protocol supports the Corporate aim of "Safeguarding Dorset's unique Environment" and shall be considered in the development and implementation of the Local Transport Plan, Maintenance Policy, Local Area Agreement, Community Strategy, Local Development Frameworks and other related policies.
- 1.05 The Protocol is a formal Policy of Dorset County Council, adopted on 2 April 2008. A Statement of Consultation is included as Appendix C of this Protocol.

2.00 Principles

- 2.01 The fundamental principle of this Protocol is that the recognition and understanding of "local distinctiveness" and "context" must guide the decisions made in the rural road environment. This principle reflects recent policy and guidance affecting the rural and built environment at

- national, regional and local levels. By taking into account its setting, the urbanising or suburbanising of the rural highway environment will be avoided.
- 2.02 The rural highway network shall be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way, balancing the needs of safety, accessibility and information provision, with those of environmental protection and conserving and enhancing the landscape, townscape and biodiversity.
- 2.03 Rural roads and streets will be designed, improved, maintained and managed holistically, with due regard to highway function, people (reflecting their range of mobility), character and context. The needs of all highway users shall be taken into account through integrated working involving a range of partners and interests.
- 2.04 Rural street improvements within settlements shall adopt the Department for Transport's 'Manual for Streets' guidance which advocates a more contextual approach to road layout. They shall also refer to the joint English Heritage / Department for Transport's 'Streets for All' South West which stresses the importance of reflecting local distinctiveness and avoiding clutter through the design and management of the road environment.
- 2.05 Within settlements, a sense of place should be maintained through the use of local materials and locally sensitive design. Locally distinctive streetscapes should be preserved, enhanced and used as references when designing changes to the highway.
- 2.06 There is no existing highway design standard which is entirely appropriate for rural roads between settlements. These roads fall between the scope of the Manual for Streets (which is applicable to rural streets) and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (intended for Motorways and Trunk Roads). Therefore, Dorset County Council's Highway Engineers (and their consultants) will select design approaches which are appropriate to the physical characteristics of the road and the environmental context. This will be achieved by setting out the principal constraints of the site at the commencement of a design and ensuring engineering judgements and decisions are documented within a Design Statement. In situations where there is potentially a significant impact on road safety, proposed solutions shall only be adopted following a risk based assessment in accordance with a formal and documented Departure from Standard procedure.
- 2.07 Independent Road Safety Audits shall be carried out at various stages of highway improvement projects to identify design proposals which are likely to increase the risk or severity of accidents and suggest remedial action with regard to road safety only. The Road Safety Audit will be considered by the Designer and, where necessary, assessed together with any adverse environmental impacts associated with implementing the remedial action. If resolution of an issue raised in an Audit is likely to lead to unacceptable environmental impact it shall be subject to a formal Risk Assessment before deciding on the course of action.
- 2.08 The surrounding landscape adjacent to the road corridor will be considered, including ecological and historic interests. The balance

should be struck between (a) the objectives of the proposed works (b) the landscape area context (c) the category of the road within the hierarchy and (d) the immediate setting of the proposed works. In making decisions about highway management and improvement, sustainability will be thoroughly considered along with the potential impacts of climate change. The flexibility that exists within the application of national regulations, standards and codes of practice will be recognised and used where appropriate.

- 2.09 Levels of signing, lining and street furniture should be minimised, consistent with the need for safety. Roadside clutter should be identified and removed or improved alternative designs implemented as appropriate.
- 2.10 Opportunities to test innovative approaches that support the Rural Roads Protocol, such as psychological traffic calming, will be encouraged, subject to thorough risk assessment and post-implementation monitoring. Sharing of experience and best practice locally and nationally will be encouraged.

3.00 Implementation

- 3.01 The following decision-making process shall be adopted (at an appropriate level of detail) in all interventions in the rural highway environment:
- Identify the Issues through engagement with appropriate stakeholders
 - Define the context and key considerations (using a checklist)
 - Develop Options
 - Assess Impacts
 - Consult Stakeholders on options and impacts
 - Select an Option based on consensus
 - Implement selected Option
 - Monitor and Review Feedback.
- 3.02 An activity on the rural highway can be initiated by any one of a number of partners or stakeholders (Highway Authority, AONB officers, Parish Council members, individual members of the public, special interest groups, Community Safety officers, Conservation Officers).
- 3.03 The decision-making process can be undertaken by key individuals involved in the commissioning and delivery of a highway project or maintenance or management activity. However, it should preferably involve local community groups in association with their councillors, schools, engineers, landscape specialists and other stakeholders. Local communities may find that the process may be incorporated into work being undertaken for a Village Plan or Village Design Statement. The degree of detail in the process and the time taken will vary, depending on the complexity of the proposals being considered.

- 3.04 Decision makers should consult the relevant Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance document for either the Dorset or Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONBs to establish the broad character, sensitivity and issues to be addressed in the areas through which the road passes and consult landscape, ecology, historic environment and rights of way colleagues to check for other designations and constraints / opportunities.
- 3.05 Many rural settlements in Dorset are designated as Conservation Areas where, in common with the landscape in AONBs, the character and quality of the built environment has been defined as special. In these locations any proposed development should either preserve or enhance the area and preferably achieve both. Where available, the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the particular location of works should be consulted and discussions held with the Conservation Officer of the relevant District Council.
- 3.06 Additional Guidance
The following guidance is proposed to supplement this Protocol. A Rural Roads Protocol website will be established to provide updates on this supplementary guidance.
- A road and street hierarchy will be established for the Dorset highway network which is suitable for defining different levels of design approach, materials specification maintenance regime, resource allocation and traffic management.
 - A checklist and consultation framework will be developed for highway engineers to help ensure that all contextual issues are covered and signposted to appropriate sources of expert help and guidance. This will identify which organisations should be consulted relevant to situation / scale of project.
 - Detailed policies and technical guidance incorporating the Principles in this Protocol will be produced in subsequent documents and will cover topics such as geometric design, verge management, traffic signs and road markings. The guidance will be structured so that recommended solutions are related to the highway hierarchy.
 - A programme of auditing highway routes and areas to identify potential to remove or improve street furniture to reduce clutter shall be established. The reports from these reviews shall be used to pursue “invest to save” reduction of the highway asset base and be incorporated into maintenance planning.
 - A programme of training and “awareness raising” events will be initiated, tailored to the variety of users of the Protocol. This will range from in-house training workshops for professionals, to talks and informal workshops for councillors and community groups. The Protocol website will also be a source of information.

Supplementary Information

4.00 The Importance of Local Distinctiveness

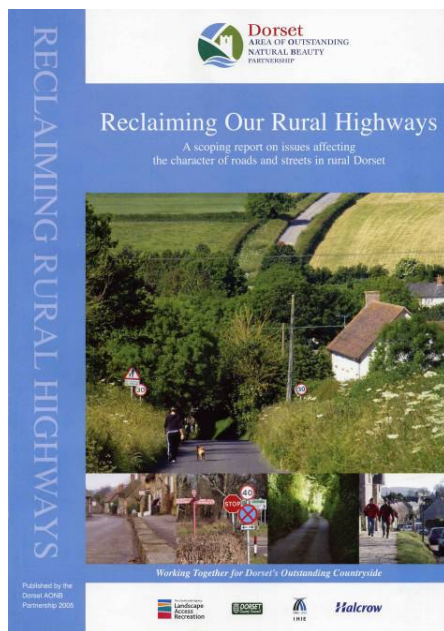
4.01 **“The County Council will ensure that development designs and transport improvements are an appropriate response to the local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness”.** (*Strategy for Air Quality and the Environment Chapter 7, page 119, Dorset (excluding South East Dorset) Local Transport Plan 2006 -2011*). Paragraph 7.10 emphasises “... Restoration, renewal and appropriate management of the historic vernacular built and natural environments must continue to be encouraged across all areas of Dorset.”

4.02 The fundamental principle of this Protocol is that the recognition and understanding of Local Distinctiveness or Context must guide the decisions made in the rural road environment. This principle is reflected in the recent policy and guidance affecting the rural and built environment at national, regional and local levels. (See Figure 1).

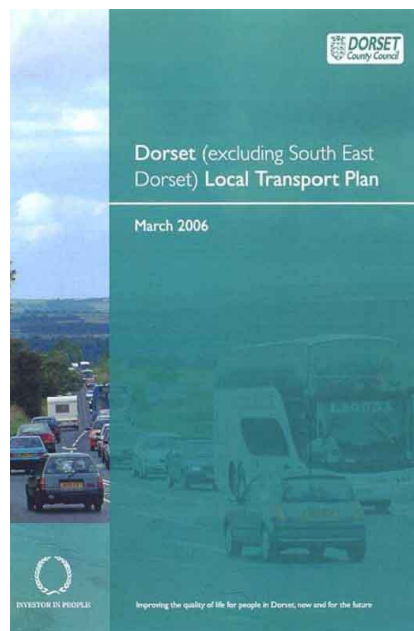
The emphasis on this principle stems from the widespread concern throughout the UK that highway design generally has hitherto imposed standardised, over engineered solutions to road issues, which have had the effect of creating uniform, somewhat suburbanised, vehicle dominated spaces, with the associated clutter of signs and street furniture. Part of the problem has been the lack of flexibility within existing standards and guidelines to develop local solutions for local contexts. The impact of highway design on the high quality landscapes of Dorset, most of which are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coasts, must underpin all stakeholders considerations.

4.03 Recent initiatives by Dorset County Council in adopting a context sensitive approach, such as the experimental removal of white lines within villages and the consideration for the retention of traditional fingerposts, are positive indications of the commitment to a more sensitive approach as advocated in this Protocol.

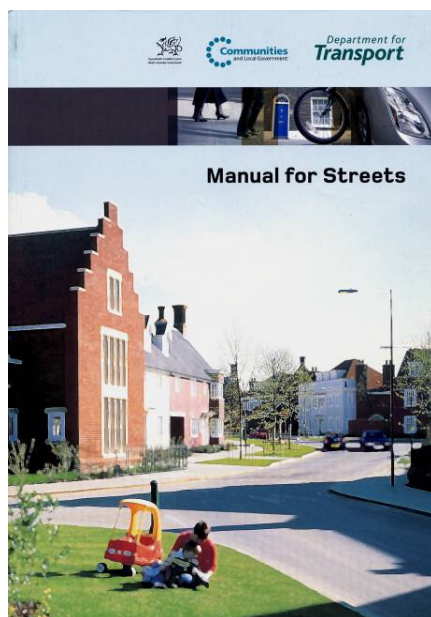
In some situations, such as minor lanes and tracks, it may be appropriate in terms of relating to local context to adopt a policy of “managed decline”, rather than devoting increased resources where this may result in a solution possibly unsympathetic to the environment.



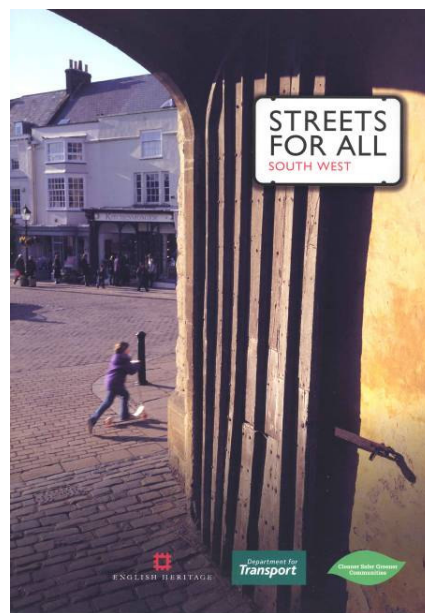
A



B



C



D

Figure 1: A selection of national, regional and local documents which influence the maintenance, management and design of the road environment.

A Reclaiming Our Rural Highways

B Dorset (excluding SE Dorset) Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

C Manual for Streets

D Streets for All. South West

5.00 Policy Context

- 5.01 With 53% of the county covered by Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) there is a duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) for local authorities in undertaking their duties to have regard at all times to the primary aim of ‘conserving and enhancing the natural beauty’ (Para 84(4)) of the AONB. Similarly, in Conservation Areas, the duty is to preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of the area.
- 5.02 The Department of Transport’s ‘Manual for Streets’ to an extent plugged the gap between the ‘Design Manual for Roads and Bridges’ (DMRB) and documents such as ‘By Design’ (2000) (DTLR and CABE) which advocated a more contextual approach to road layout and design in urban areas. The principles of the ‘Manual for Streets’ (DfT 2007) are relevant to streets in rural settlements, although it is primarily focused on residential urban roads. English Heritage and the Department of Transport’s ‘Streets for All’ campaign (2005) stressed the importance of local distinctiveness and reflecting this in decision making in relation to our roads, streets and lanes. The ‘Streets for All’ South West volume is relevant for Dorset (figure 1: D).
- 5.03 The Environmental Protection Act 1991 refers to measures to prevent clutter and the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991, requires that highway authorities replace road surface materials on a ‘like for like’ basis. This is especially important where traditional paving materials are involved.
- 5.04 At the regional level, the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (2006-2026) (RSS) defines a South West regional transport network which includes provision for freight movement through the county (policyTR12). This will help to inform the policy base for the emerging Local Development Frameworks (LDF’s) throughout the county and in neighbouring counties and will have a significant bearing on the developing character of the regional road network.
- 5.05 At the local level Dorset County Council in its capacity as Local Highway Authority for Dorset clearly lays out its policy foundation for this Protocol in Chapter 7 of the “Dorset (excluding South East Dorset) Local Transport Plan 2006 -2011”.
- 5.06 This Chapter of local policy includes the following objectives on matters covered by this Protocol:

“The objective for the environment is to protect and enhance the richness and diversity of Dorset’s natural and built environment and cultural heritage through:-

- Avoiding damage to, or where this is not possible, seeking to minimise the impact of transport on the natural, built and cultural environment.
- Enhancing the natural, built and cultural environment through careful management of the existing environment and design of transport improvements/
- Designing transport improvements that complement Dorset’s high environmental quality and improve the public realm in ways that respond to the local context.
- Guiding development to complement Dorset’s high environmental quality and improve the public realm in ways that respond to the local context.

- Providing sustainable options for access to Dorset's visitor attractions including the World heritage Site.
- Limit air pollution to levels that do not damage human health and the environment."

5.07 This Chapter on local policy then includes the Key Actions on matters covered by this Protocol:

- "The County Council will ensure that development designs and transport improvements are an appropriate response to the local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness.
- The level of inappropriate speed will be reduced, not only where this is a major contributory factor to accidents, but also in areas where local communities find speed intimidating and detrimental to their quality of life.
- Traffic management measures will be introduced, including 20mph speed zones to ameliorate damage to rural communities on heavily trafficked routes such as the A350/C13 and A35.
- Smart traffic management technology will be used to achieve reduced traffic impact where appropriate.
- Traffic management measures that restrict or remove unnecessary traffic will be introduced in Dorset's market towns to ensure that they function more effectively.
- A lorry routing strategy will be developed that is consistent with the regional freight strategy.
- A Rural Roads Protocol will be developed for the sensitive and sustainable treatment of rural roads, encompassing safety, information, environmental protection, landscape, biodiversity and heritage, and to develop design and management guidance to give effect to the protocol.

This chapter on local policy supports the objectives and Key actions. Particularly, but not exclusively relevant are 7.12, 7.25 – 7.32 and 7.37 – 7.44.

6.00 The Rural Road: Hierarchy, Areas and Routes

6.01 What is a rural road?

For the purpose of this Protocol, a rural road is one of a range from major to minor, which runs predominantly through the countryside and smaller freestanding settlements.

The rural road changes character along its route; passing through different areas of landscape character, being enclosed by hedge banks, walls, and street frontage buildings. Other routes may be characterised by their open nature, travelling through undulating scenery.

6.02 The road is not merely a two dimensional corridor for traffic; it is often a series of linked 'places' as it passes alongside village shops, schools and places of worship. The rural road is an environment with different levels of enclosure, gradient and changes of direction. These changes of environment can be utilised to influence driver behaviour (figures 2: & 3:).

Footpaths, where they exist, require appropriate edge & surface treatment.

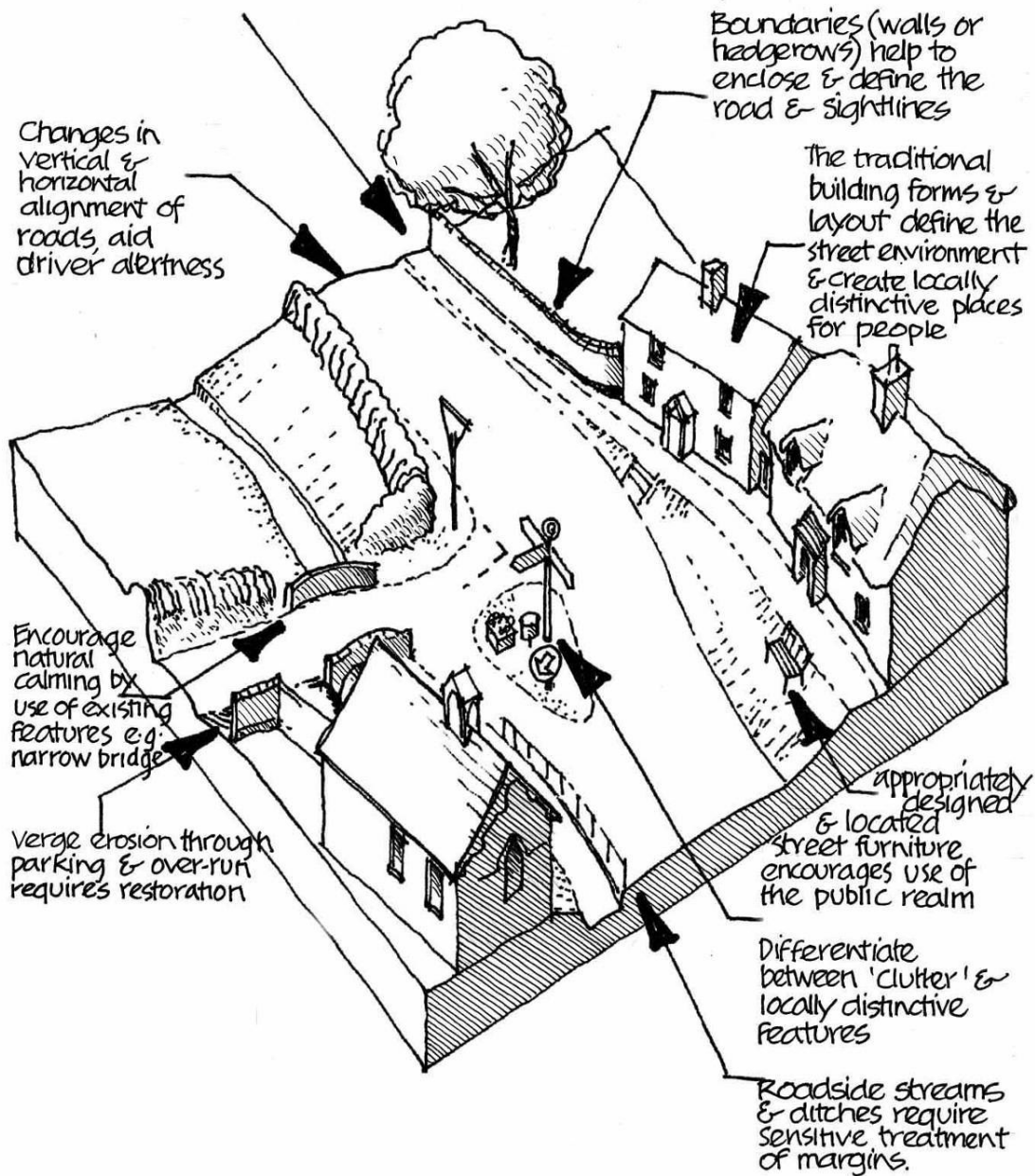


Figure 2: Perceiving the Rural Road Environment Holistically

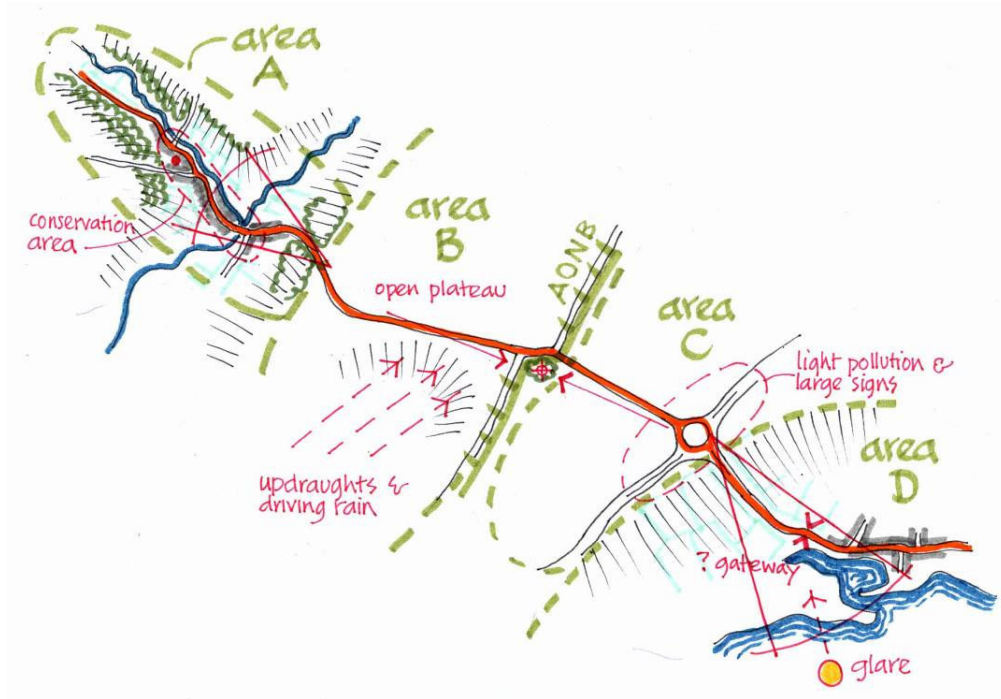


Figure 3: Appraisal of the Route of a Rural Road

Diagram showing a rural road of a particular classification passing through a range of environmental conditions and landscape character areas. The appraisal of this route could highlight issues and locally distinctive solutions.

6.03 Why is a Hierarchy Necessary?

Hitherto the road hierarchy has not been appropriate at the lower range of rural and minor roads as the existing guidelines for design specification and maintenance lack the level of refinement to suit the context. As indicated previously, this has often led to standard solutions being adopted resulting in inappropriate measures being taken.

6.04 This Protocol has adopted the Road Hierarchy developed by the Dorset County Council (figure 4:) where every road is given a classification according to its role in the road hierarchy. Different levels of design approach, specification and resource allocation will be related to each road type.

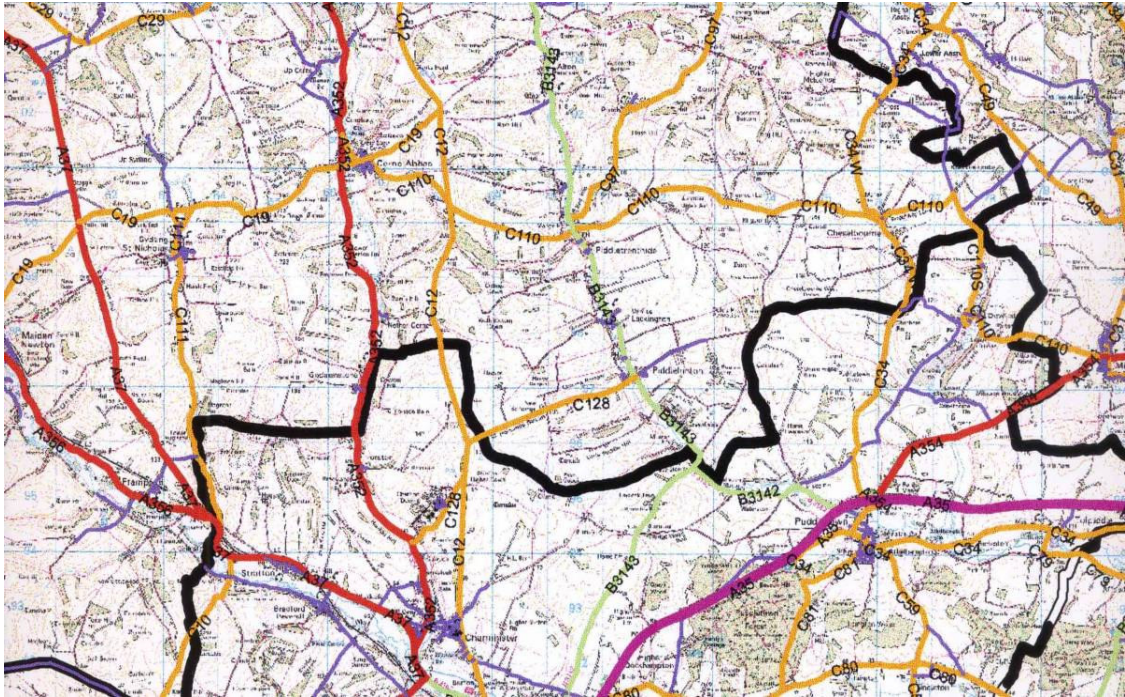


Figure 4:

Extract from the road hierarchy map of Dorset. Each road is numbered and classified. It is evident how much of the county is accessed by minor roads in the landscape.

6.05 Areas of Landscape Character

Roads pass through a range of landscape character, each requiring an appreciation of what road improvements may be appropriate.

6.06 The Protocol requires that decision makers involved in road environment projects consult the Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidance for the Dorset and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (figure 5:) to establish the broad character, sensitivity and issues to be addressed in the character areas through which the road passes.

6.07 Substantial character areas within each of the AONBs (figure 6:) have such a well defined and positive identity that the road environment within them should be considered in a consistent manner. This approach might include the treatment of roadside verges, use of timber posts, total absence of lighting, low level, minimal signs etc. In these cases a cordon of 'gateways' to the area might be appropriate where some indication of a particular uniform speed restriction or the absence of road markings would be established. The design and materials used at these gateways should be appropriate to the context and as restrained as possible.

6.08 Route Design.

At the detailed level of road design, specification and local management, it is essential to recognise that whilst the Road Type and Landscape Character Areas (figure 6) will establish an overview of the approach to be taken, it will be the appraisal of the route environment in the more immediate context of the works which will ultimately ensure the appropriateness of the solution. Some typical scenarios which may be addressed can be seen in section 7. Inevitably other issues may be found, but the approach should be the same.

6.09 Roads in Conservation Areas.

Rural roads inevitably connect settlements. Many settlements in Dorset are designated as Conservation Areas, (approximately 225) where in common with the landscape in AONBs, the character and quality of the (built) environment has been defined as special, and therefore proposed development should either preserve or enhance the area and preferably achieve both.

It is likely that proposed road works in conservation areas will be considered in the light of their contribution towards the preservation or enhancement of local distinctiveness. The roads in many settlements have verges with soft edges and few formal pavements with kerbs. Here the road is an undifferentiated, shared space used by pedestrians and vehicles.

It is recommended that the Conservation Area Character Appraisal (where available) for the particular location of works is consulted. This will identify any design and management issues in the public realm which require attention (these may for instance include removal of clutter, retention and re-use of traditional surface materials, importance of maintaining traditional boundaries etc). Discussion with the Conservation Officer of the relevant District should lead to a coordinated action plan which, through consultation with the local community, should address local aspirations and concerns.

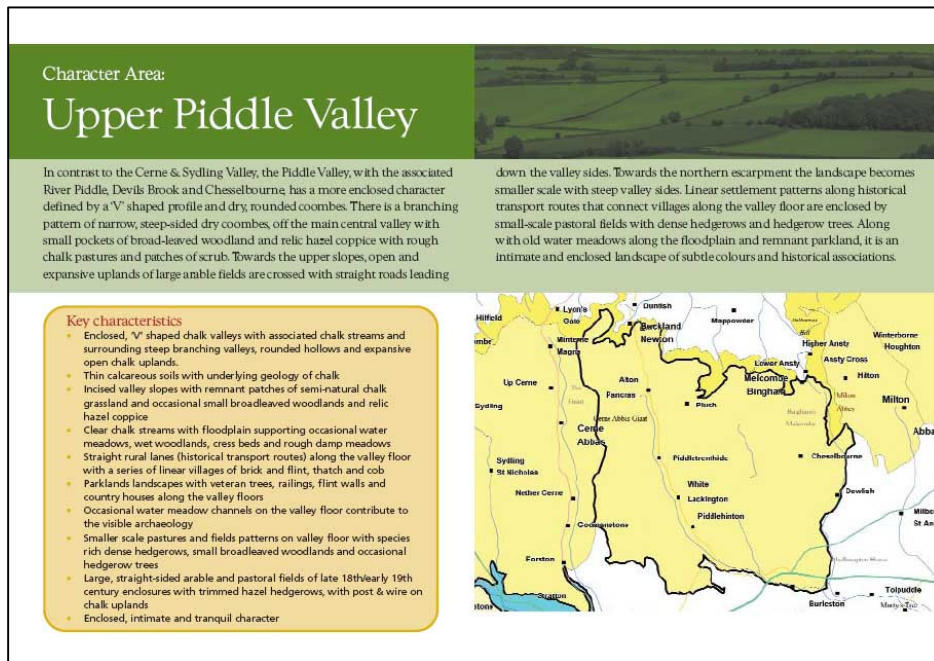


Figure 7: Extract from “Conserving Character” (AONB 2007) p58; An example of a character area which provides a general overview of the context of a rural road.

7.00 The Decision-making Process

7.01 In order to ensure and demonstrate that Tasks have been properly defined and considered ‘in the round’ regarding the issues to be addressed, the context to be considered and the risks taken into account, a sequence of decisions is set out below, which should form the basis of an agenda for the Briefing of a project.

7.02 Who is Involved in the Process?

The Process is undertaken on an individual basis, or more usually by groups, local communities in association with their councillors, schools, engineers, landscape specialists and other stakeholders should be involved on the Process. The degree of detail and the time taken will vary, depending on the complexity of the Task to be undertaken. The important factor is that each Stage is addressed, preferably in the sequence shown. Local communities may find that the process may be incorporated into work being undertaken for a Village Plan or Village Design Statement.

7.03 The Decision-making Sequence (see also Figure 8).

Stage A. Initiate

A task can be initiated from any one of a number of partners or stakeholders in the rural road environment: (Highway Authority, AONB officers, Parish Council members, individual members of the public, special interest groups, Community Safety officers, Conservation Officers). It is essential that each stakeholder agrees to the decision-

making sequence, to ensure that the points B – F below have been shown to have been considered. Therefore a record of the decisions taken should be included in a Task file.

Stage B. Identification of the Issues.

The reason for the Initiation may be symptomatic of other issues, or the addressing of one issue may be coupled with addressing another.

Typical issues may be:

- the need to reduce traffic speed in village High Streets
- removal of signs
- addition of signs
- discouragement of heavy through traffic

Is the issue related to a specific location, or is the incidence of the issue elsewhere in the road hierarchy, character area and route?

Interviews, questionnaire surveys or meetings may be necessary to identify the nature of the issues.

Checklist of Documentation to be Consulted

Prior to on-site surveys etc it is advisable to ensure that existing policies, research and guidance have been consulted, in order to avoid wasted effort and to give credibility to the task to be considered.

Stage B.

- Consult Police records on road traffic accidents and their exact location.
- Consult Local Transport Plan policies
- Have any formal or informal surveys been carried out in the vicinity?

Stage C. Examine the following guidance and surveys

- Landscape Character Assessment (either AONBs or Countywide)
This will identify important characteristics of landscape areas.
- Conservation Area Appraisal for a settlement (where available).
 - the Appraisal will highlight features of importance.
 - the Management Plan will pinpoint possible issues in the streetscape which should be addressed.
- A Village Plan or Village Design Statement
 - These will be useful in assessing a settlement overall (not just the conservation area).
- Rural Road Hierarchy: for types of Road Characterisation.

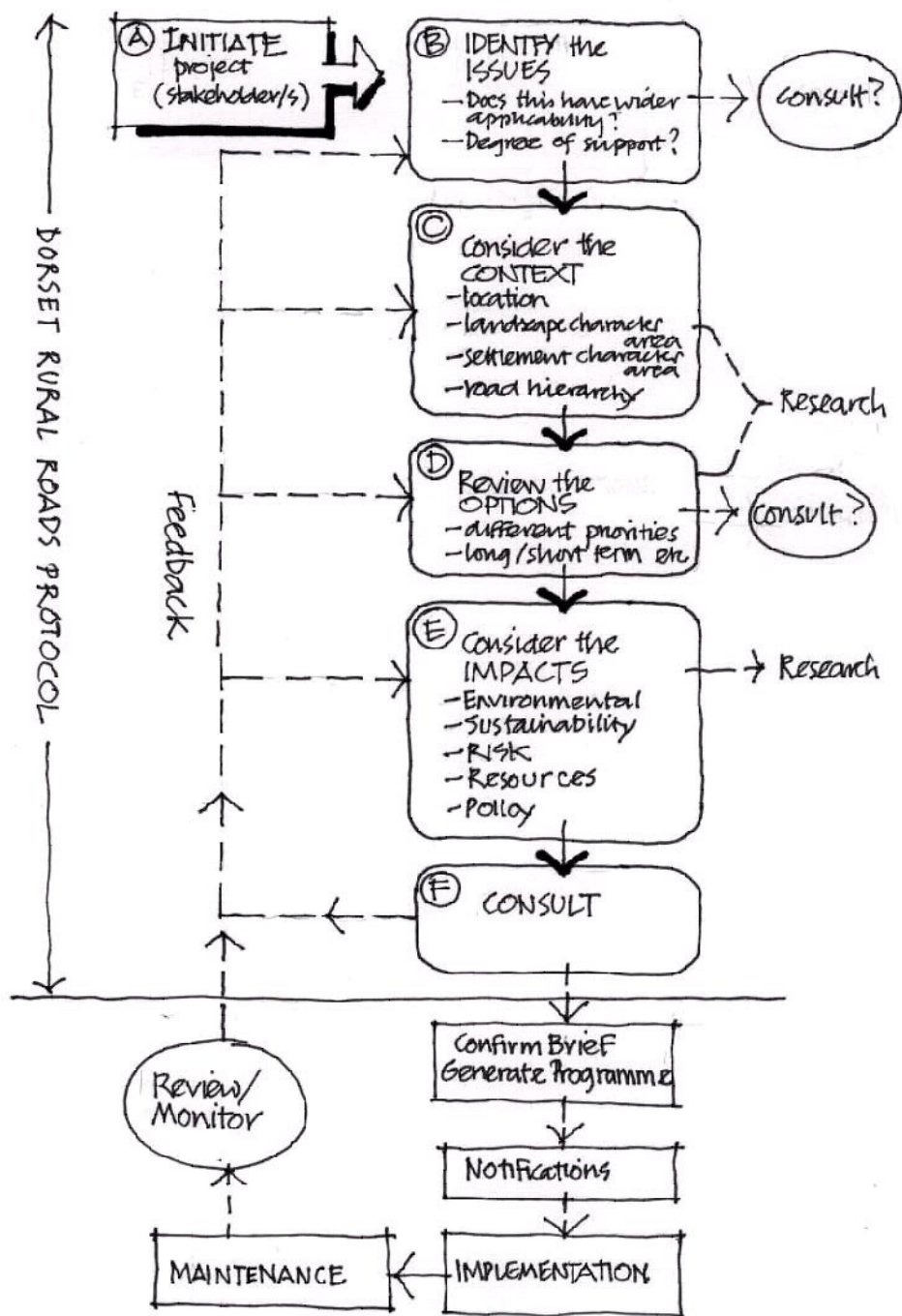


Figure 8: The decision-making sequence

Stage C. Consideration of Context.

Examine the location.

- What aspects of the location could be negative or positive in addressing the issues? (eg the narrowness of a lane could alert the driver to risk, or is it inherently dangerous for pedestrians?)
- Always remember the three dimensional nature of a location and how it is approached on a route.
- Consider the location by day and night, in fine or poor weather, at quiet and busy times, in different seasons.

Examine the character of the landscape setting.

- Does the nature of the landscape (open/enclosed, wild/cultivated, upland/lowland etc) suggest certain solutions or preclude others?

Examine the character of the settlement setting.

- Does the nature of the 'townscape' (formal/informal, small scale/larger scale, dispersed/compact etc) suggest certain solutions or preclude others?
- The close relationship of buildings and boundary walls to the highway can often positively influence driver behaviour through restricted sight lines, a sense of enclosure and the established use of shared spaces.

Examine the type of road.

- Is the nature, flow and frequency of traffic appropriately matched to the nature of the road?

Methods of Analysing and Appraising the Context

These may take a variety of forms and vary in detail, but the following recommendations should be considered.

- A map based study will ensure accurate location of features, issues and remedial actions. Maps should be of sufficient scale to indicate contours, boundaries, buildings etc. A download satellite image can provide additional information.
- Photographic images will be particularly useful, especially if the location of each image is identified on a map.
- The notation symbols in Appendix A and figure 9: can be useful in locating the position and extent of positive and negative features to be taken into account. They can also act as a checklist of considerations when surveying.
- Appropriate symbols can be sketched onto specific locations on the map. The symbols are indicative; others can be developed for situations not included.
- The advantage of the notation symbols is that they offer a consistent and methodical approach to appraisal of an area or group of areas and that they are an accessible format in considering subsequent stages of the Process.

Stage D. Review the Options.

It is important to consider a range of realistic choices for action (including 'Do nothing'). Develop solutions which use the location as a starting point, rather than a stock, standard solution.

Consider the 'Less is More' approach, in other words doing more with less.

Consider the option that higher initial costs can result in lower maintenance costs over time (i.e. whole life costing).

Sketch plans or computer aided visualisations can help to convey the character and impact of each option for review by each stakeholder. (See Fig 9:)

Stage E. Consider the Impacts.

Visual impact.

- Would the proposed works have an adverse visual impact on (a) the wider setting (eg. tall street lights, increased traffic intrusion, long views)? (b) the immediate locality: removal or retention of hedges, fewer or more signs and road surface markings, buildings masked by signs?

Sustainability and climate change.

- Will the choice of materials etc have adverse or positive environmental impacts?
- Can materials be sourced relatively locally?
- Does the solution facilitate an improved walking/cycling experience?
- Does the solution respect wildlife habitats and corridors or improve biodiversity? (eg hedgerow and verge maintenance).

Risk.

- Does the solution heighten the alertness of the driver?
- Can existing natural or built features be manipulated to modify driver behaviour?
- Have the proposed solutions been derived from risk aware good practice?

Policy.

- Are there policy implications in the proposed actions? (Highways, Planning etc.)

Resources.

- What are the long and short term costs? Are resources available from other related programmes? Is there a role for the voluntary/community sector?

Stage F. Consult

The local community and other stakeholders may already have been consulted at earlier stages of this process (for instance B and D), but in any event, consultation should take place at this stage, where properly

evaluated options can be discussed with the community. Where schemes directly relate to settlements then a programme of community involvement at various stages of the above process should be considered.

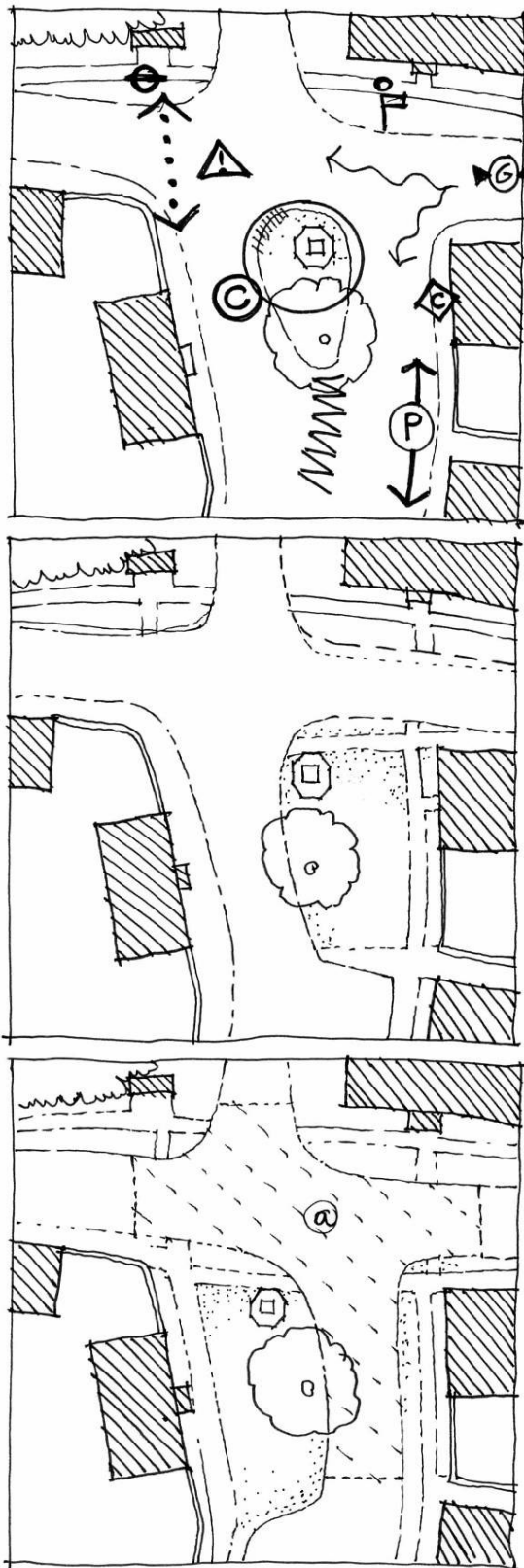
Every effort should be made to involve a fair representation of all groups in a community, especially those who rarely participate in community decision-making.

'Workshop' events are often more involving and constructive than conventional public meetings.

Allowance should be made for feedback from representations to influence the outcome of the scheme.

Following stages A to F a detailed design and initiation programme will commence, incorporating the approach defined as the outcome of Stages A to F.

Stage G onwards would be subject to detailed technical guidance developed in separate documents.



Analysis/Appraisal

(using notation in Appendix B)

Issues

- clutter
- “shrinking” island
- road domination
- poor pedestrian experience
- poor setting of war memorial
- too many white lines
- fast through traffic

Option A

(Developed at community workshop)

- enlarge the Green by “anchoring” it to east side
- larger Green= community focus and better setting for memorial
- sharper bends help reduce traffic speed and aid pedestrians.

Option B

- enlarge the Green by “anchoring” it to west side
- other advantages as Option A
- change of surface to help reduce traffic speed(a)
- memorial relocated

Figure 9: Example of Aspects of the Decision-making Process Applied to a Village Road Junction.

8.00 Assessment and Mitigation of Risk.

8.01 Positive Use of Risk.

The protocol is intended as a tool for raising the awareness of risk to keep the road user alert through the promotion of alternative, more creative ways of traffic management.

The Protocol seeks to promote appropriate schemes which do not expose the driver or road user to unnecessary levels of signage or carriageway infrastructure, commensurate with the type of road travelled within the particular areas of the county. This will ensure that each proposal is assessed not only from a safety audit viewpoint, taking into account the potential risks, but is also tailored to the sensitivities of the context of the proposed intervention.

8.02 Relationship between Safety Audits and Risk.

The safety audit will make recommendations to eliminate risk wherever possible or significantly reduce it or provide proposals for mitigating that risk. The safety audit should pay regard to aesthetic considerations of the proposal in relation to its wider context. This Protocol takes environmental and contextual factors as material considerations in the decision-making process.

In situations where there is potentially a significant impact on road safety, proposed works and measures shall only be adopted following a risk based assessment in accordance with a formal and documented Departure from Standard procedure

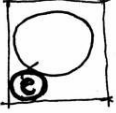
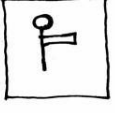
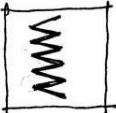

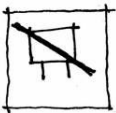
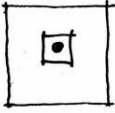
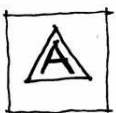


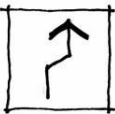
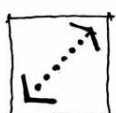
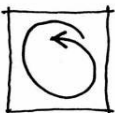
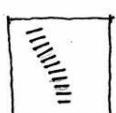
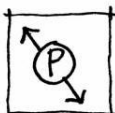

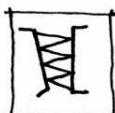
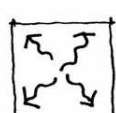
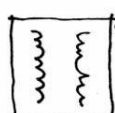

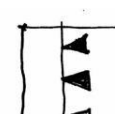
8.03 Audit Trail


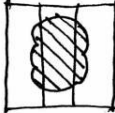

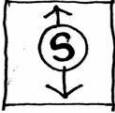
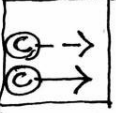
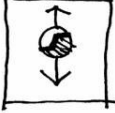

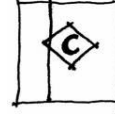
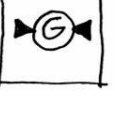

In all cases it will be essential to demonstrate that a robust and well considered process has been undertaken in order to arrive at the possible solutions. The Protocol must form part of the safety audit /risk assessment considerations. It will not be acceptable to recommend best practice (based on national guidance) without considering and responding to the sensitivity of the context. In many cases this may be a significant change to established working practises particularly in relation to the use of external contractors for the undertaking of road safety audits.

APPENDIX A:

SUGGESTED NOTATION FOR APPRAISING THE RURAL ROAD ENVIRONMENT

This is indicative – other symbols could be added as appropriate. Fig 9: shows an example of the use of the Notation.

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | CLUTTER (circle around clutter of signs/posts, poorly located street furniture etc) |  | TRADITIONAL FINGER POST |
|  | INTRUSIVE ROAD MARKINGS |  | TRADITIONAL RAILINGS |
|  | UNNECESSARY ROAD SIGN |  | TRADITIONAL STREET FURNITURE (specify) |
|  | LOCATION OF PREVIOUS ACCIDENTS |  | VIEW ALONG STREET TERMINATED BY BUILDING/WALL |
|  | HAZARD (specify) |  | DEFLECTED VIEW &/OR ROUTE |
|  | PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AREA (unmarked) |  | ATTRACTIVE SPACE |
|  | EROSION OF ROAD MARGIN |  | ON-STREET PARKING |
|  | UNCERTAINTY (tight sight lines, hidden dip in road etc) |  | PINCH POINT (road narrows between buildings etc) |
|  | POORLY DEFINED OPEN AREA OR OVER-WIDE ROAD JUNCTION |  | ROAD ENCLOSED BY HEDGES (h) or WALLS (w) |
|  | INAPPROPRIATE/SUBURBAN KERBING |  | ENTRANCES OPENING DIRECTLY ONTO STREET |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | PARKING AREA DIRECTLY FRONT- ING ONTO STREET |  | TREE CANOPY CREATING 'TUNNEL' ROAD |
|  | STREETSCENE DOMINATED BY OVERHEAD WIRES |  | SUNKEN ROAD/ LANE |
|  | GRADIENT C=crest --> medium -> steep |  | RAISED FOOTPATH |
|  | AREA OF TRADITIONAL PAVING |  | COMMUNITY HALL, CHURCH or SCHOOL ENTRANCE |
|  | POTENTIAL VILLAGE GATEWAY |  | BUS STOP |

The Notation symbols can be sketched onto a map; they are useful to pinpoint the exact location of, for example, extent of clutter, areas of eroded verge, location of hazards or accidents, unnecessary signs.

APPENDIX B:

Road Hierarchy (draft)

| Existing Category | | Proposed Category | | Proposed Category Function | COP category |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--|--------------|
| 2 | Strategic Routes | 2 | Strategic routes | National primary County Regional Freight routes | 2 |
| 3a | Main distributors | 3 | Main distributors | Trafficked to a limit ?? Other designated freight routes | 3a |
| 3b | Secondary distributors | 4 | Secondary distributors | Trafficked to a limit ?? | 3b |
| 4a | Local inter-connecting | 5 | Local distributors | Serving towns, large villages and important urban roads | |
| 4b | Urban local access | 6 | Collector road | Serving other villages, designated cycle routes. Other significant generators of traffic, other urban routes | 4a |
| 4c | Designated cycle route | | None | None | 4b |
| 5 | Rural local access | 7 | Minor collector road | Serving hamlets and scattered properties | |
| | | 8 | Minor access | Serving fields only, duplicate routes, un-surfaced | |

APPENDIX C:

Statement of Consultation: Rural Roads Protocol Development

This Protocol is the outcome of wide ranging consultation both within the local community and County Council, the AONB and other agencies. Consultation commenced in 2005 and was focused in working groups between 2007 and 2008. The consultation and familiarisation process will continue during the implementation of the Protocol.

During phase 1 [2005 – Nov 2007] in March 2007, a workshop was arranged. 37 people attended represented the following groups:

- DCC members
- Officers of the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnerships [AONB]
- Members of the Rural Roads Task and Finish Group
- DCC Officers
- DCC Consultancy Officers
- External Consultants
- Hampshire County Council

Wiltshire County Council was consulted during further meetings relating to partnership working in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB area.

Norfolk County Council was also consulted about a number of projects they have put in place.

103 people were asked to respond on the phase 1 report: they represented the following groups:

- Officers of the two AONB Partnerships
- Members of the Rural Roads Task and Finish Group
- DCC officers: Client, DEC, DWO, Highway management, Planning, Nature conservation.
- The Police
- Parish, Town, District and Borough Councils

Phase 2 work and consultation [late 2007/early 2008] was undertaken through four theme groups:

- Design
- Traffic Management
- Highway Management
- Customer Interface

A Protocol group was established to coordinate the consultation in association with the consultants from November 2007

As part of a pilot study for the protocol a location trip to the Piddle Valley for representatives of the County Council, elected members, AONB and consultants was organised in December 2007.

The following people contributed by attending 1 or more groups. Sponsors had a chair or checking role

12 external contacts:

| Name | Representing |
|-----------------------------|--|
| - David Webb | Chief Executive DAPTC [Retired] |
| - Andrew Shaw (DCC officer) | DSP nominee |
| - John Parker | Chief Executive DAPTC |
| - Kevin Morris | NDDC |
| - Mr Robin Bawtree | CPRE |
| - Mrs N Barker | District Councillor WDDC |
| - Richard Burden | AONB [CC&WWD] |
| - Sarah Bentley | Dorset AONB Team Manager |
| - Scott Oliphant | Police |
| - Sue Mitchell | DAONB Access, Recreation & Transport Officer |
| - Tony Gibb | DAPTC |
| - Vincent May | Purbeck Heritage Committee |

28 DCC staff were also involved, plus Members:

- Portfolio Holder for Environment
- Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transportation
- Highway Client
- Highway Management
- Traffic Group
- DEC
- DWO
- Street lighting
- Archaeology
- Landscaping
- Audit

The wider community has had the opportunity to input to the Protocol:

The Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils [DAPTC] were consulted directly about the report. DAPTC have supported the project by consulting with Parish Councils, particularly those linked to the pilot route areas of the Piddle Valley and Maiden Newton.

Between 2006 and 2008 a number of Parish council meetings on the pilot routes have also been attended by a project officer to publicise the project further:

- Maiden Newton
- Piddle Valley
- Buckland Newton & Duntish

Other parishes informed of the protocol related to other projects:

- Colehill
- Burton Bradstock

Managers, Management Engineers, Designers are all aware of the project and publicise its ethos during their own discussions with communities related to other areas and schemes. DAONB also promotes the aims of the protocol through its work with communities, projects and other organisations.

LIST OF CONSULTEES.

November 2007 – March 2008

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Andy Ackerman | Dorset CC. Head of Highway Client Services |
| Cllr Nicky Barker | Piddle Valley Parish Council/District Cllr WDDC |
| Richard Bastow | Dorset CC. Highways Manager |
| Sarah Bentley | Dorset AONB. Team Manager |
| Andrew Berry | Dorset CC. Management Engineer LTP & Improvements |
| Cllr Geoffrey Brierley | Dorset CC. Cabinet Member. Strategic Planning and Transportation |
| Richard Burden | Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB |
| Chris Cocker | Dorset CC. Area Manager (West), DWO |
| Cllr Hilary Cox | Dorset CC. Deputy Leader. Cabinet Member for the Environment |
| Ian Foulger | Dorset CC. (DEC) Principal Engineer : Maintenance |
| Tony Gibb | Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils |
| Maj. Reg Handbury | Piddlehinton Parish Council representative |
| Paul Hannam | Dorset CC. (DEC) SEN Engineer |
| Stephen Hardy | Dorset CC. Principal Planner |
| Tony Harris | Dorset CC. Landscape Architect |
| Peter Holtom | Dorset CC. (DEC) Principal Engineer : Highways |
| Stephen Howard | Dorset CC. Network Manager |
| Tony Mackle | Dorset CC. Traffic and Safety – Section Manager |
| Rod Mainstone | Dorset CC. Street Lighting Manager |
| Prof Vincent May | Purbeck Heritage Committee. AONB Board |
| Susan Mitchell | Dorset AONB Access Recreation & Transport Officer |
| Kevin Morris | North Dorset DC. Policy Manager (Environment) |
| Jon Munslow | Dorset CC. Asset Manager |
| Richard Nicholls | Campaign to Protect Rural England |
| Tim Norman | Dorset CC. DEC Chief Engineer |
| Sgt Scott Oliphant | Dorset Police |
| John Parker | Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils |
| Claire Pinder | Dorset CC. Senior Archaeologist |
| Robin Powell | Dorset CC. Group Auditor |
| Andrew Shaw | Dorset CC. Officer Highways. (DSP) nominee. |
| Rob Smith | Dorset CC. Network traffic Ssfety Team Leader |
| Richard St Leger | Dorset CC. (DEC) Principal Engineer |
| Richard Stubbs | Dorset CC. Traffic Management |
| Julian Thomas | Dorset CC. LTP & Improvement Manager |
| Rod Turner | Dorset CC. Assistant Highways Manager |
| David Webb | Chief Executive. Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils |
| Tim Westwood | Dorset CC. Transportation Manager |
| Mike Winter | Dorset CC. Head of DEC |
| Consultants | |
| Richard Guise | Director. Context4D. Architect & Planner |
| James Webb | Director. Forum Heritage Services. Urban Designer. |

APPENDIX D:

GLOSSARY

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Area designated by the Countryside Agency (in England) where the primary purpose is the conservation and enhancement of areas of outstanding beauty, including extensive areas of fine landscape, flora, fauna and geology.

Clutter

Redundant, unnecessary or obsolete signs, poles and street furniture which through their size, design and/or insensitive siting, are intrusive features within the landscape or the streetscene within settlements.

Conservation Area

“An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. (See Planning Policy Guidance Note 15). Note that the implications are that character is different from appearance and that we have a duty to enhance and improve, as well as to preserve.

Conserve

To safeguard the essential character of a valued landscape or built environment which enhances its character whilst managing it in such a way as to ensure its sensitive evolution.

Context

The setting or surroundings of a site of proposed roadworks or development. Aspects of the setting are likely to influence the way in which the development/works are sensitively designed, maintained or managed.

Decision-making Process

A logical sequence of decisions which ensures that a proposed course of action has been considered ‘in the round’ and in a way which is open to scrutiny by others.

Gateway

The entrance to a settlement where the road environment could be sensitively modified to influence driver behaviour.

Hierarchy

The range of road and lane categories from major to minor and the appropriate treatment of each category depending on its position in the hierarchy.

Landscape Character Assessment

“A tool for identifying the distinct and recognisable patterns of elements in the landscape that give a locality its sense of place, describing what makes it different from its neighbouring areas”. (See “Conserving Character: Landscape Character Assessment and Guidance for the Dorset AONB” Dorset AONB 2007).

Local Distinctiveness

Aspects of the local built and natural environment which individually or collectively contribute to a sense of being different from other areas or regions.

Maintenance

The repair or replacement of highway surfaces, verges or signage.

Management

The planned sequence of maintenance. Also the measures taken to ensure appropriate responses to speed, traffic volume and the relationship between pedestrians and vehicles, balancing risk with the environmental quality of an area.

Natural or Psychological Traffic Calming

Measures taken to reduce speed and collision through the use of existing features in the landscape or streetscene, such as hedgerows, bends, restricted sight lines, boundary walls or buildings, or changes of road surface, to communicate to the driver that hazards exist and extra vigilance should be exercised. This approach contrasts with the widespread reliance on generous road markings and signage.

Risk Aware

The need to assess the possible risks arising from a task or decision and to weigh these against the environmental and community benefits of that decision. The assessment may result in transferring more responsibility to the driver, to heighten awareness of the possible consequences of his/her actions.

Shared Surface

An area of the road environment, where vehicles, pedestrians and animals share the same highway surface without kerbs and pavements.

APPENDIX E:

PROTOCOL ACTION PLAN

The tasks below have been identified as essential stages in the implementation of the Protocol.

| Task | Timescale |
|--|--|
| 01 Protocol Launch, Communication and Training. (community, DCC, other agencies) | Meetings with parishes commenced Feb 2008. Main programme from summer 2008. |
| 02 Pilot Project: Piddle Valley Route. (to test decision-making and design process). | Commenced Dec 07. Working group convened Feb 2008. Implementation autumn 2008. |
| 03 Rural Road Hierarchy. Working group to determine a hierarchy appropriate to the rural road environment. | Working group convened Jan 2008. Completion summer 2008. |
| 04 Risk Management. Working Group to consider the risk implications of the Protocol, produce guidance and modify processes. | Working Group convened Feb 2008. Completion autumn 2008. |
| 05 Production of Checklist and Consultation framework, to ensure that all contextual matters are considered. | Working Group to be convened spring 2008. Completion autumn 2008. |
| 06 Design guidance production: Approaches to working within the Principles of the Protocol. | Development summer 2008. Delivery autumn/winter 2008. |
| 07 Landscape and Environment: Assessment and Management techniques. Workshops (to run concurrently with 05 and 06). | Development summer 2008. Delivery autumn 2008. |
| 08 Road Environment Appraisal, Guidance for community groups/parishes, to identify clutter, maintenance and management issues. | Development summer 2008. Delivery from autumn/winter 2008. |
| 09 Implications for Planning Policy and Conservation. Workshops for Districts. | Development summer 2008. Delivery winter 2008. |
| 10 Maintenance and Management Workshops for DC. Topics include: Lining and signage, verge management, street lighting, highway management. | Development autumn 2008. Delivery winter 2008/spring 2009. |