

Reallocating road space to support active travel and social distancing

About FTA

The Freight Transport Association (FTA) is one of Britain's largest trade associations, and uniquely provides a voice for the entirety of the UK's logistics sector. Its role, on behalf of over 18,000 members, is to enhance the safety, efficiency and sustainability of freight movement across the supply chain, regardless of transport mode. FTA members operate over 200,000 goods vehicles - almost half the UK fleet - and some one million liveried vans. In addition, they consign over 90 per cent of the freight moved by rail and over 70 per cent of sea and air freight.

To manage the spread of Covid-19, there is a need for people walking and cycling to be able to practice social distancing. In many cases, narrow pavements and cycleways make this difficult, so the government has announced guidance for local authorities to make use of road space which is currently quieter due to the fall in traffic volumes as people heed the government's advice to stay at home. However, we must ensure that we do not create barriers to the logistics industry which is playing a vital role in keeping supplies moving around the country and within our towns and cities. FTA's areas of concern are two-fold: access to the kerbside for deliveries and servicing activity and potential increases in journey times.

Following the government's announcement about changes to the lockdown restrictions, and in particular to encourage those who cannot work from home to go to work, this could mean that quite quickly, the roads become busier again. Therefore, it is important that any temporary reallocation of road space for walking and cycling can be flexed and changed in a dynamic way to reflect changes in demand.

The majority of high street frontages are currently closed, but as we start to see a partial reopening, it is important to ensure that access to the kerbside for deliveries and servicing activity is maintained. Furthermore, there is likely to be an increased need for the logistics sector to restock of these premises as economic activity grows, and this demand for kerbside access must be accommodated.

As many people will continue to work from home or choose to self-isolate, the high volumes of home deliveries will continue, so it is important to also maintain access for deliveries in residential streets.

We seek reassurances from highway authorities on the following points:

- Any temporary reallocation of road space for walking and cycling should be flexed and changed in a dynamic way to reflect changes in demand and to ensure access for vital logistics services.
- Kerbside access must be maintained at all times for deliveries and servicing.
- Roads are only closed where it would not cause an unduly large diversion and consideration must be given to the impacts of displaced traffic on nearby roads.
- Local businesses must be consulted, even though their shop-fronts may be closed, so they can make sure proposals meet their needs when they re-open.
- Enforcement against delivery vehicles must be proportionate and focussed on vehicles which are causing an obstruction to traffic flow or danger to road safety.
- Restrictions on delivery hours should be reviewed to enable, where possible, deliveries to take place at times when the roads are quieter, including earlier in the morning, later in the evening, overnight and at weekends.

11 May 2020