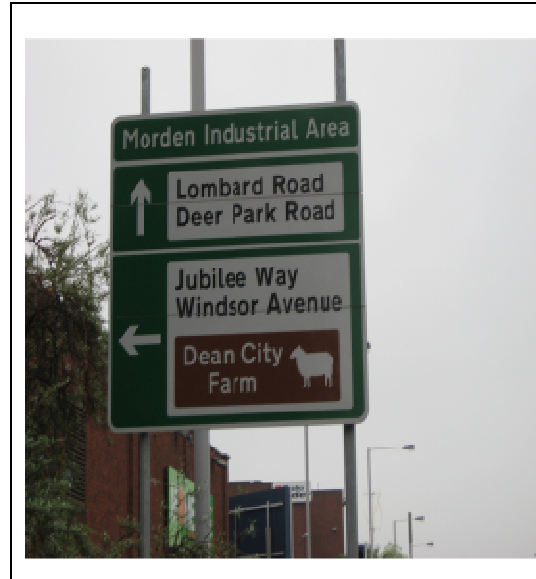


South Wimbledon Business Area Signage Review



Final Report

Prepared for

**The London
Borough of Merton**

by



Transport & Travel Research Ltd

**On behalf of the South London
Freight Quality Partnership**

Version 1.0

December 2009

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Author(s)	Corina Negrea
Quality Control	Chris Douglas
Project Manager	Chris Douglas
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A qualitative analysis of the public road network signage and private estate signage was carried out in order to establish a set of recommendations to improve efficiency, safety and sustainability of local freight movement in the South Wimbledon Business Area (SWBA), located in the London Borough of Merton.

It has been observed that there is a general issue of consistency in naming covering the SWBA as is illustrated later in this report. Signage to SWBA sometimes refers to 'Morden Industrial Area' and 'Merton Business Area' as well as SWBA. This is potentially confusing to a heavy goods vehicle (HGV) driver not familiar with this business/industrial area.

Within the SWBA there is both a mixture of new and old signage as well as public road network and private estate signage of varying quality which do not always complement each other.

The report recommendations focus on the creation of a consistent identity and brand for SWBA and the provision of strategic clear master signage for the entire industrial area to improve the efficiency, safety and sustainability of delivery and servicing activity in SWBA. This will be achieved by the following actions.

1. Provision of large SWBA titled information boards at each of the three entrances. These boards should list the roads followed by the names of the industrial parks/centres that are located on them e.g. Lombard Road - Jubilee Business Centre and Lombard Business Park.
2. The identification boards should be repeated at the major junctions of the SWBA such as Jubilee Way with Windsor Avenue and Deer Park Road with Lombard Road to provide support for HGV drivers to identify roads within SWBA with specific industrial parks/areas.
3. Implementation of the individual recommendations for both public road network and private estate signs that are included in section 3 of the report.
4. For the London Borough of Merton to work together with the private landlords to ensure that consistent improvements in both public road network and private estate signage are provided.
5. All measurements given on signage, other than for distance, should be provided in a metric format to facilitate deliveries being made by foreign lorry drivers.

1 SIGNAGE REVIEW BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

TTR was appointed in March 2009 by The London Borough of Merton to undertake a signage review in its capacity as coordinator of the South London Freight Quality Partnership. This report builds on the initial South Wimbledon Business Area (SWBA) Freight Movement Study which was carried out in the autumn of 2008 by TTR. A recommendation from the above mentioned report was to carry out a signage review of SWBA.

The map below illustrates the roads inside SWBA, as well as the linkage of the area with the main road network. The SWBA is bounded to the West and North by the A24, to the East by the River Wandle and to the South by London Tramlink. It can be accessed via two junctions with the A24, which is a red route, managed by Transport for London. The first, and main entrance, is at the junction between Morden Road and Jubilee Way and the second is at the junction between Morden Road and Lombard Road. The third entrance is on Windsor Avenue which is a residential area that is subject to width restrictions for HGVs.

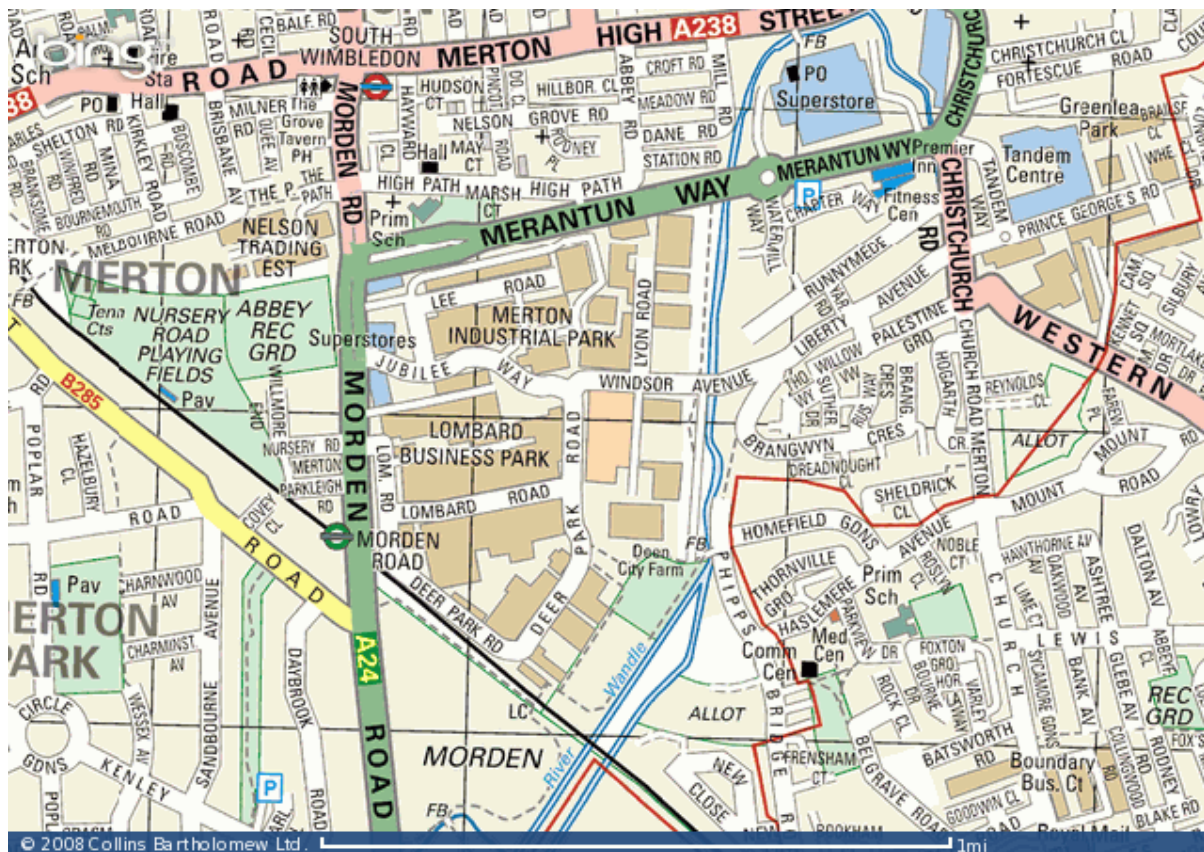


Figure 1: South Wimbledon Business Area in connection with the road network (Source: Multimaps)

Although not illustrated by the above map there are a total of seven industrial park/business areas within SWBA. These are:

- Merton Industrial Park (North) which includes a DIY superstore and businesses such as 'Bako' and 'Worldwide Dispensers'.
- Riverside Business Park located on Lyon Road.
- Saxon Business Park located on the 'unnamed Road' south of Lyon Road.
- Windsor Park Industrial Estate located on Windsor Avenue.
- Lombard Business Park on Lombard Road.
- Jubilee Business Centre on Lombard Road.
- The Tramlink (24 Deer Park).

Figure 1.1 below illustrates the various industrial estates and business centres included in South Wimbledon Business Area.

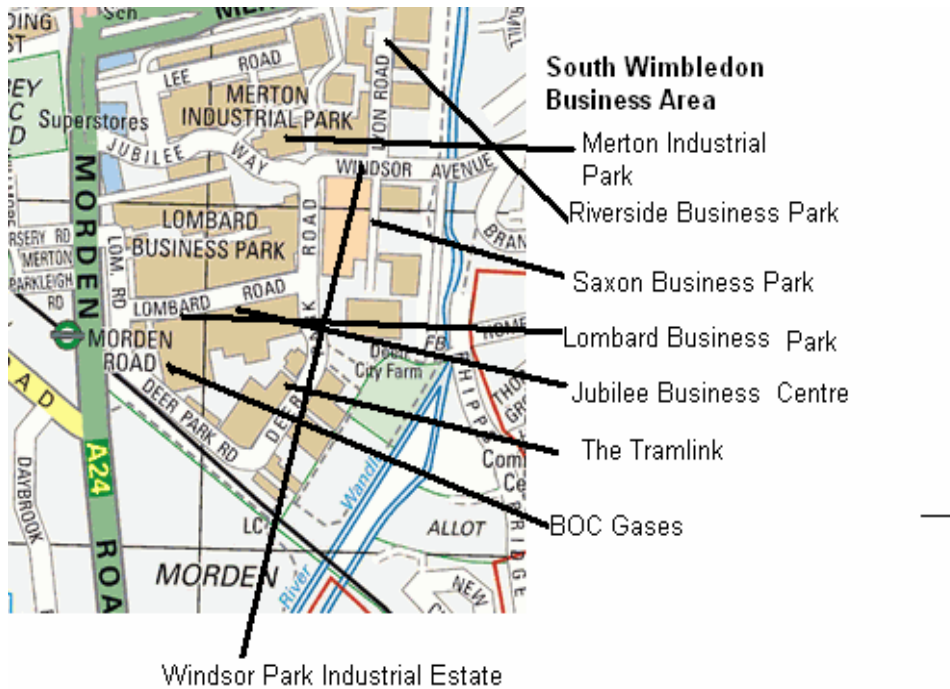


Figure 1.1: Industrial and business parks in South Wimbledon Business Area

The objective of this report is to provide an unbiased analysis of the signage provision directing HGVs from the main road network to SWBA as well as reviewing the signs for HGVs inside the industrial area. This analysis is based on criteria such as accuracy of the existing signs, location, visibility and position on the road. The recommendations suggested after each section of the signage review aim at improving freight movements in SWBA in terms of efficiency, safety and sustainability. By providing clear, accurate and visible signage the accessibility to the area could be increased.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 comprises a description of the methodology used in gathering the information about the existing signage, both on-road and private signage.
- Section 3 includes two parts: the first part focuses on the existing road signage on the main road network offering directions to SWBA, while the second part focuses on both public road network and private estate signs within the SWBA as well as the individual recommendations for each particular sign
- Section 4 outlines the project team's main signage recommendations in order to improve freight movements in terms of efficiency, safety and sustainability in SWBA as well as providing clear information for HGV drivers.

The report focuses on analysing the existing signage provision and offers suggestions for road signage improvements with the objectives of enhancing information for visiting goods vehicle drivers servicing premises within the Area.

Our overall recommended strategy is to improve signage on the adjacent roads directing towards SWBA and on the roads inside SWBA, and not for the individual Business Parks which lack clear identity and could therefore lead to confusion.

A visit to SWBA site took place on 13th May 2009 with the purpose of assessing the existing signage provision and determining how the road signs could be improved. A second site visit took place on the 16th September to validate the findings from the first visit.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology for undertaking the work involved two days on site, 13th May 2009 and 16th September 2009, walking through the SWBA and its constituent industrial parks, assessing the existing signage and recording visibility, legibility and sequencing. Photographs were also taken of the signage.

This report covers an analysis of the signage provision in SWBA as following:

- 1) Existing signs on main roads with directions to SWBA
- 2) Existing signs inside SWBA with directions to various business centres and individual business premises
- 3) Suggested new signs' locations, directions to SWBA from the main road, and inside SWBA to various industrial parks and individual businesses.

The analysis, which is contained in section 3 in the report, is a qualitative assessment of the data collected from the site visits from the perspective of the HGV driver not familiar with the SWBA. In addition, based on the existing signs' locations, accuracy and legibility, recommendations of locations where additional signage could be provided are supported by local maps. Where appropriate, private signage was analysed, but our priority recommendations apply mainly to road signs over which The London Borough of Merton has direct authority. In some cases, coordination of signage improvements between The London Borough of Merton and Transport for London would also be necessary.

The direction in which the road signs are described is from North to South starting with the Morden Road junction with Jubilee Way which is the main entrance to SWBA. Further along Morden Road is the second entrance to SWBA at the junction with Lombard Road.

The analysis for existing signage within SWBA commenced by going East along Jubilee Way to Windsor Avenue, taking into account adjacent roads. Adjacent roads, i.e. Lee Road and Lyon Road, were analysed going West to East along Jubilee Way and Windsor Avenue. Signage analysis continued going South down Deer Park Road from Jubilee Way which joins with Lombard Road East and loops back to Lombard Road West.

Following the on site audits all information was reviewed, each sign assessed and recommendations for signage improvements developed. The results of the work and our recommendations are contained within this draft report.

3 REVIEW OF THE EXISTING SIGNAGE

3.1 Existing signage on main roads directing to SWBA

3.1.1 General observation on naming of area

There is a general issue of consistency in names covering the SWBA as later in this report illustrates; signs to SWBA sometimes call the area 'Morden Industrial Area' and also 'Merton Business Area' as well as SWBA. This will be confusing to a road user not familiar with this business/industrial area.

3.1.2 Road sign on Morden Road, left side of the road (going South)

Approaching the SWBA (figure 3.1) on Morden Road coming from the North (on A219) the sign indicating Morden Industrial Area is located close to the junction with Jubilee Way (figure 3.2), potentially not allowing HGV drivers/ road users sufficient time to make a decision about turning left towards Jubilee Way.

Figure 3.1: Sign indicating SWBA/Morden Industrial Area



Recommendations

It is recommended that the sign indicating left to Jubilee Way/ Windsor Avenue and ahead for Lombard Road be relocated. The relocated sign (figure 3.2) could be moved just after the junction with Merantum Way.

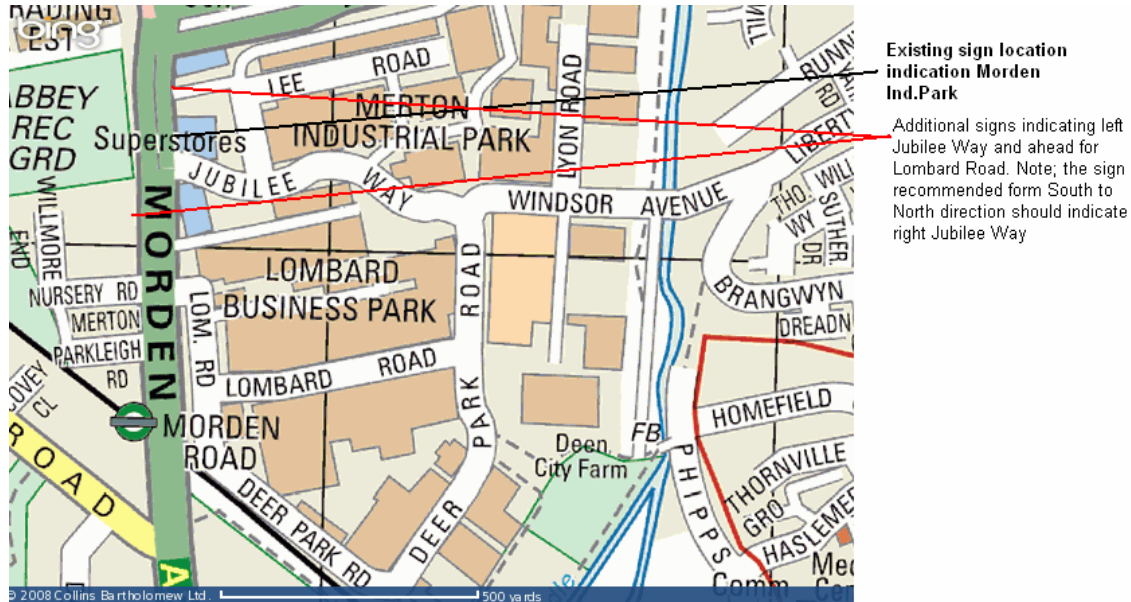
To give additional assistance and safety consideration for HGV drivers turning left, a white left turn road marking indicating 'Ind Est' could be provided within the left hand lane.

Please note the misspelling of Deen City Farm on the brown & white part of the sign. The sign indicating Deen City Farm should be indicating Deen City Farm. We recommend correcting the misspelled name of the farm in any current and new signage.

3.1.3 Road sign on Morden Road going North

There is no sign indicating SWBA on Morden Road coming from South to North on the A24 to indicate a right turn to Jubilee Way before the junction.

Figure 3.2: Recommended Location for the signs (Source: Multimap)



Recommendation

To be consistent, additional signage should be provided for a right turn, thus providing appropriate information to road users travelling from South to North.

3.1.4 Road sign on Morden Road indicating left to Lombard Road

Continuing to travel South on Morden Road, there are no appropriate road signs (figure 3.3(a)) to indicate the entrance to SWBA via Lombard Road i.e. if an HGV driver misses the first sign, or wants to access Lombard Road as indicated by the sign at the previous junction, there is no other sign assistance for SWBA.

Figure 3.3(a): Indicative signage of Lombard Road (SWBA entrance)



This junction is indicated only by the road name sign illustrated in figure 3.3(a) which is visible at the far side of the junction and potentially difficult for a driver to see in sufficient time in advance.

Recommendation

Signage to direct drivers to SWBA from the adjacent road network could be improved by providing additional signs to indicate the left turn to Lombard Road. It should be ensured that the signs are in accordance with the name/branding of the area– avoiding terms like ‘Morden Industrial Area’ etc and focusing solely on SWBA.

3.1.5 Road sign on Morden Road indicating right turn on Lombard Road

Coming from the South going North on Morden Road there is a sign that indicates a right turn for Lombard/Deer Park Road as illustrated by figure 3.3(b).

Figure 3.3(b): Indicative signage of Lombard Road (SWBA entrance coming from South to North)



The main issue with this sign is the fact that it indicates Morden Industrial Area which raises the issue of clarity and consistency of branding across the wider industrial area.

Recommendation

Signage to direct drivers to SWBA travelling on Morden Road from South to North could be improved by providing repeat signs and ensuring consistency in the naming of signs – avoiding terms like ‘Morden Industrial Area’ etc and focusing solely on SWBA.

3.2 Indicative signage inside SWBA with directions to business centres and individual business premises

3.2.1 Private sign indicating Merton Industrial Park

On Morden Road at the junction with Jubilee Way (North South direction) there is a private sign indicating Merton Industrial Park (figure 3.4).

- Location: it is on the side of the pavement and could be confused as part of a building name as it is behind a wall; it is unclear to road users as it is positioned after the junction with Jubilee Way

Figure 3.4: Signage indicating Merton Industrial park



- Visibility: only partially visible, covered by trees
- Potentially increases the confusion between SWBA, Merton Industrial Park and Morden Industrial Area illustrated in the signs described further above

Recommendation

The existing road and private sign provision could potentially lead to confusion among road users by having different signs indicating differently named industrial areas. Our priority recommendation is that at the entrance to the area, a large identification board, with the consistent brand of SWBA, should be provided indicating 'Jubilee Way, leading to..... (name of the roads and the corresponding industrial parks)' e.g. Jubilee Way ⇔ Merton Industrial Park, Windsor Avenue ⇔ Windsor Ind. Estate, Riverside and Saxon Business Park, etc to reduce confusion among HGV drivers unfamiliar with the area. This will ensure clearer information for drivers on arrival at the entrance to the area and will help to consolidate branding to a uniform 'SWBA'.

3.2.2 Road sign East to West on Jubilee Way

Coming from the East to West direction on Jubilee Way towards Morden Road, there is a sign that indicates 'no left turn at South Wimbledon' for HGVs (figure 3.5) and a left turn for A3.

Figure 3.5: Sign indicating no left turn at South Wimbledon on Jubilee Way



- Accuracy /legibility: the sign appears damaged and a driver unfamiliar with the area would not necessarily know the location of Milner Road.
- Lack of clarity: ideally the sign would have both metric and imperial measurements to avoid confusion by foreign drivers.

Recommendation

The sign provides valuable information to HGV drivers about movement restrictions, however it could be improved by giving more information about the location of the restriction, rather than the basic reference to Milner Road.

3.2.3 Private sign on Jubilee Way East direction

On Jubilee Way travelling East (figure 3.6) there is a sign that indicates the Merton Industrial Park. Although the sign has been updated with the names of the businesses with premises in Merton Industrial Park, the sign still contributes to the confusion about the name of the area and is inadequate due to the following:

Figure 3.6: Sign indicating Merton Industrial Park on Jubilee Way



- Location: The signpost is located just after the junction with Lee Road, on top of the hill and is not easily visible. The writing is too small to be easily readable by road users.
- The map that is illustrated on the signpost does not inform the reader where they are, i.e. there is no 'You are here' indicator.
- Visibility: The number of the businesses listed and their names are not clear and visible to drivers on Jubilee Way. The signpost could be easily missed and, in the worst case, cause distraction to road users. To read the sign a driver would need to stop, or park and leave the vehicle which could inevitably cause congestion.

Recommendation

The private sign, although potentially useful, could be improved by being increased in size and with legibility improved.

3.2.4 Private sign on Jubilee Way West direction

On Jubilee Way, travelling west towards Morden Road in junction with a private access road, a second sign indicating Merton Industrial Park (figure 3.7) displays the identical format of information to the sign in Figure 3.6.

As mentioned above, this type of sign is not easily visible to road users from their driving position. The information that is presented is not visible from a distance.

Recommendation

The private sign could be improved by being increased in size, with improved legibility and coordinated with the 'you are here' road position of the reader.

Figure 3.7: Sign indicating Merton Industrial Park West on Jubilee Way



3.2.5 Road sign on Jubilee Way East direction

On Jubilee Way, travelling East on the left side of the road, there is a sign indicating Morden Industrial Area, just before the junction with Windsor Avenue and Deer Park Road (figure 3.8). The sign is not clearly visible due to the small dimensions of the sign board and the relatively small characters in which the information is presented. Morden Industrial Area is presented as the title of the signpost and, again, this should be labelled SWBA to ensure consistency.

Figure 3.8: Sign indicating Morden Industrial Area



Recommendations

The dimensions of the sign board described in figure 3.8 could be increased so it could be more visible to HGV drivers from a distance and at the seating position within an HGV cab.

A repeat identification board should also be provided indicating the name of the roads and the corresponding industrial parks e.g. 'ahead for Windsor Avenue ⇨ Windsor Industrial Estate, Riverside and Saxon Business Park and left for Deer Park Road ⇨ The Tramlink and Lombard Road ⇨ Lombard Business Park and Jubilee Business Centre'. This would help to reduce confusion among HGV drivers unfamiliar with the area.

3.2.6 Road and private signs indicating Lee Road

There is no road sign on Jubilee Way travelling east to Lee Road which includes Merton Industrial Park and other various business premises. The current sign is only a road name sign.

Figure 3.9: Sign indicating Lee Road



Lee Road is a busy road for HGV deliveries, as it has two major DIY superstores, as well as the vehicle yards of businesses such as 'Bako' and 'Worldwide Dispensers' (figure 3.10.).

Figure 3.10: Private business's entrance on Lee Road



Recommendations

A repeat identification board could be provided indicating the name of the roads and the corresponding industrial parks e.g. left for Lee Road and ahead for Jubilee Way ⇒ Merton Industrial Park, Windsor Avenue ⇒ Windsor Ind. Estate, Riverside and Saxon Business Park etc. to reduce confusion among HGV drivers unfamiliar with the area.

Providing a clearer, larger sign, positioned in advance of the junction with Lee Road, showing details of roads and businesses would be of benefit to goods vehicle drivers.

There is also currently no sign to indicate that Lee Road is cul-de-sac.

3.2.7 Road signs indicating width restrictions on Windsor Avenue East direction

Travelling East along Windsor Avenue, the sign indicating the width restriction (figure 3.11) to deter HGVs going into the residential area further along Windsor Avenue is not clearly visible to road users due to the small dimensions of the sign. Ideally imperial and metric measurements would be provided, as it is known (from the original freight Movement Study) that certain businesses within SWBA have vehicles from Europe making deliveries/collections.

Figure 3.11: Width restriction on Windsor Avenue



A second signpost on Windsor Avenue before the junction with Lyon Road could reinforce that a part of Windsor Avenue is unsuitable for HGVs, as well as keeping the sign about the road restriction on that section of the road itself (figure 3.12). This will give HGV drivers sufficient advance warning to make a U-turn, if necessary.

Recommendations

Ideally imperial and metric measurements would be provided on the road signs as certain businesses within SWBA will have vehicles from elsewhere in Europe making deliveries/collections.

The width restriction should be mentioned on a repeat identification board at the junction between Jubilee Way, Windsor Avenue and Deer Park Road, as described in section 3.2.5 above.

Figure 3.12: Sign indicating width restriction



3.2.8 Road signs on Windsor Avenue East direction

The sign indicating Morden Industrial Area travelling East along Windsor Avenue on the right hand side of the road, in front of the building used as a TV studio has been identified as being inaccurate. This sign is in the wrong location as it refers to the Morden Industrial Area, which does not exist, and Lombard Road which is not near or adjacent to Windsor Avenue.

Figure 3.13(a): Inaccurate sign indicating Morden Industrial area facing the wrong direction- from a distance



Figure 3.13(b): Inaccurate sign indicating Morden Industrial area facing the wrong direction-close up



As illustrated by figure 3.13(a & b), the existing sign is also facing the wrong direction on the road, i.e. facing outwards from the pavement, towards the opposite pavement and therefore not easily visible to road users.

Recommendations

Unlike many of the other road signs, which can be improved, we recommend that this road sign be removed from the road, due to the potential confusion it could generate over the direction to various other roads within SWBA and its position facing perpendicular to the direction of travel .

Identification board on Windsor Avenue west to East direction

The priority recommendation for improving road signage on Windsor Avenue is that a large, repeat identification board that describes 'left turn to Lyon Road ⇨ Riverside Business Park & ⇨ Windsor Park Ind. Estate and right turn ⇨ Saxon Business Centre & Deen City Farm' be provided.

Identification board on Windsor Avenue East to West direction

On the reverse of the identification board (east to west direction) before the junction with Deer Park Road, signage indicating 'left turn for Deer Park Road ⇨ The Tramlink, Lombard Business Park & Jubilee Business Centre and ahead for Jubilee Way & A24' should be provided.

3.2.9 Deer Park Road junction with Lombard Road (East)

Travelling south down Deer Park Road, Lombard Road East is the first turning to the right. Lombard Road is a no entry road from Deer Park Road (figure 3.15).

There is no road sign or private sign to indicate ahead direction for accessing Lombard Road, past the premises of Sunlight Laundry and also round the corner to BOC Gases.

Figure 3.15: No entry sign to Lombard Road from Deer Park Road



Recommendations

Deer Park Road junction with Lombard Road East going South

A repeat large identification board should be provided indicating 'ahead for The Tramlink and A24 and for Lombard Road ⇒ Lombard Business Park & Jubilee Business Centre'.

Deer Park Road junction with Lombard Road East going North

A repeat large identification board should be provided indicating no entry left turn to Lombard Road, ahead for Jubilee Way ⇒ Merton Industrial Park & Superstores/A24 and right turn for Windsor Avenue ⇒ Windsor Park Industrial Estate, Saxon Business Centre. This additional identification board could offer assistance to HGV drivers exiting business premises on Lombard Road East and Tramlink.

Figure 3.16: One way road section on Deer Park Road



During the site survey road users were seen to be travelling in the wrong direction down the one-way system, indicating that they may be confused and potentially creating a safety risk on Deer Park Road, thus more prominent signs could be provided.

3.2.10 Road sign on Deer Park Road South West and junction with Lombard Road West

Travelling south west along Deer Park Road, along the one-way system, the existing sign provision is illustrated by figure 3.17.

Figure 3.17: Sign indicating the exit onto the main roads



The only clearly visible sign which indicates a right turn to SWBA, as shown by figure 3.18 is a cycle sign and would be of limited use to an HGV driver.

There are no road signs providing assistance for HGV drivers to inform about the right turn into Lombard Road and its industrial Estates - Lombard Business Park and Jubilee Business Centre.

Figure 3.18: Sign Indicating SWBA



Recommendation

An additional road sign could be provided before the intersection between Deer Park Road and Lombard Road West, informing the HGV drivers about the right turn to Lombard Road leading to Lombard Business Park & Jubilee Business Centre.

3.2.11 Lombard Road West – East direction

Travelling east along Lombard Road from Deer Park Road there are no signs indicating the businesses in Lombard Business Park/Jubilee Business Centre to further assist the HGV drivers.

Recommendations

Provision of a repeat identification board indicating 'right turn for Deer Park Road ⇒ Tramlink/A24 and left turn for Jubilee Way ⇒ Merton Industrial Park & Superstores, Windsor Avenue ⇒ Windsor Park Industrial Estate, Saxon Business Centre should be provided on Lombard Road east before the junction with Deer Park Road.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The South Wimbledon Business Area (SWBA) is a busy industrial area with a mix of large and small businesses. Over time, the industrial area has grown in size and complexity. It seems that efforts have been made over the years to update the road signs to meet the demand of the changing traffic and business environment. This has been done on a fragmented basis as changes have occurred.

The key issue with the area is that it contains a mixture of road and private signage that do not necessarily complement each other. There is insufficient signage indicating directions to the locations of the various constituent business parks. The overall result is that a large number of signs have become inaccurate, unclear and poorly positioned, adding an element of confusion to road users. In some cases this could create an overall safety issue within the road infrastructure of the SWBA.

Our recommendations for improving signage at SWBA are set out below.

1. The most important (and therefore priority) recommendation is for improvements to the strategic master signage to be carried out. Therefore we strongly recommend the provision of large, accurate and legible identification boards to be sited at the three entrances. These would be branded SWBA and list the names of the roads followed by the industrial parks that are located on them. Consistent branding will diminish confusion among the HGV drivers, improve public perception about the accessibility to the area by clarifying the link between SWBA and its constituent business/industrial parks.
2. Provision of repetitive identification boards indicating road names and providing directions to the corresponding industrial parks/business centres at key junctions and along the one way system within SWBA.
3. Section three of this report highlights individual roads and particular junctions in the SWBA where there are particular signage issues. Individual recommendations are detailed within this section. Implementing these recommendations would be expected to facilitate traffic movements and enhance safety in the area.
4. Although the first priority is the amendment/improvement of road signs over which the local authorities have direct influence, we recommend a close partnership between the London Borough of Merton and the local landlords to improve the consistency of private estate signage. In addition, a close partnership with Transport for London would ensure quality signage to SWBA from the strategic road network.
5. All measurements given on signage, other than for distance, should be provided in a metric format to facilitate deliveries being made by foreign lorry drivers.

The above recommendations provide a hierarchy of actions. The provision of good quality information at the entrance to the business area, followed by consistent,

legible and sequential signage as drivers approach their destination will best facilitate delivery and servicing activity in SWBA.