

ROAD HIERARCHY

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This briefs the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) on the purpose of the Roads Hierarchy and proposes changes to the existing hierarchy which was developed in 2004.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the SLWG confirms its agreement to the proposed changes.

3. Background

3.1 In 2004 Argyll and Bute Council produced its Roads Maintenance and Asset Management Strategy based on guidance in “Well Maintained Highways – a code of practice for highway maintenance management.”

3.2 A major component of this document was the Roads Hierarchy. This is an allocation of roads into groups containing roads with similar functions and risks.

3.3 A road whose function is to move large numbers of vehicles including HGVs over longer distances requires a different approach than does a road carrying small numbers of mainly cars over short distances. Intervention levels and types of surface treatment would be different for these two types of roads.

3.4 As an example of risk, Road A may have high numbers of vehicles travelling at high speed. Road B could have a large numbers of vehicles travelling at low speeds. A 50mm deep pothole in Road A would be a considerable hazard requiring urgent attention. The same pothole in Road B would be a lesser risk and could have a higher quality repair carried out less quickly. Inspection intervals, response times and types of repair are risk based and would be different for different types of road.

Table 1 Risk Matrix

Risk Comparism			
Road	Traffic Volume	Traffic Speed	Risk
A	H	H	High
B	H	L	Medium

C	L	L	Low
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- 3.5 The Road Hierarchy was therefore developed in order that similar types of road can be managed and maintained in a similar and consistent fashion.
- 3.6 The code of practice provided a table showing a possible hierarchy as a reference point. Argyll and Bute Council simplified this and produced a hierarchy with three levels.

Table 2 Hierarchy from Well Maintained Highways

Rank	Hierarchy Description	Type of Road	Detailed Description
2	Strategic Road	Trunk and some Principal 'A' Roads between Primary Destinations	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic. Principal 'A' roads with little frontage access or pedestrian traffic. Speed limits are usually in excess of 40 mph and there are few junctions. Pedestrian crossings are either segregated or controlled and parked vehicles are generally prohibited.
3a	Main Distributor	Major Urban Network and Inter-Primary Links. Short – medium distance traffic.	Routes between Strategic Routes and linking urban centres to the strategic network with limited frontage access. In urban areas speed limits are usually 40 mph or less, parking is restricted at peak times and there are positive measures for pedestrian safety.
3b	Secondary Distributor	Classified road (B and C class) and urban unclassified bus routes carrying local traffic with frontage access and frequent junctions.	In rural areas these roads link the larger villages and HGV generators to the Strategic and Main Distributor Network. In built up areas these roads have 30 mph speed limits and very high levels of pedestrian activity with junctions some crossing facilities including zebra crossings. On-street parking is generally unrestricted except for safety reasons
4a	Link Road	Roads linking the Main and Secondary Distributor Network with frontage access and frequent junctions.	In rural areas these roads link the smaller villages to the distributor roads. They are of varying width and not always capable of carrying two way traffic. In urban areas they are residential or industrial interconnecting roads with 30 mph speed limits random pedestrian movements and uncontrolled parking.
4b	Local Access Road	Roads serving limited numbers of properties carrying only access traffic.	In rural areas these roads serve small settlements and provide access to individual properties and land. They are often only single lane width and unsuitable for HGVs. In urban areas they are often residential loop roads or cul-de-

Table 3 Argyll and Bute Council Hierarchy 2004

Rank	Hierarchy Description	Type of Road	Detailed Description
1	Strategic Road	Linking large main centres of population. Linking large main centres of population to Trunk road network.	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic with little frontage access or pedestrian traffic. Generally speed limits are in excess of 40mph and there are a few junctions. Normally two lane with no footway.
2	Main Distributor	Lifeline Routes connecting secondary centres of population to main population centres and Trunk road network.	These routes provide lifeline access from small villages to services within main population areas. They are of varying widths and not always capable of taking two way traffic.
2a	Urban Distributor	Main routes within built up areas. Bus routes and routes to hospitals. Routes linking urban routes to Strategic roads.	Routes between Strategic Roads and urban areas. Main routes within urban areas linking to commercial areas of towns and larger villages. Routes to Hospitals, Main Schools and other strategic buildings. On street parking is generally unrestricted and speed limit is 30mph with random pedestrian overment. Normally two lane with adjacent footways.
3	Minor Roads	Routes serving small settlements and individual access.	Lightly used lifeline routes serving small isolated communities, individual access to property and land. Predominately narrow single carriageway.
3a	Minor Urban Roads	Minor roads within urban areas	Residential loop roads or cul-de-sac. With or without footways and within 30 mph restriction. Spur roads to commercial areas

3.7 The Road Hierarchy for Argyll and Bute has not been reviewed since 2004. There are known anomalies and a need to revisit the types of road making up the hierarchy to better align with the Argyll and Bute Council Roads Asset Management Strategy and with the Local Development Plan. The proposed hierarchy is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Argyll and Bute proposed hierarchy.

Rank	Hierarchy Description	Type of Road	Detailed description
1	Strategic Road	Primary route linking Main Towns (Local Plan 2.12 Table A) to each other or the Trunk Road network - Campbeltown, Helensburgh, Oban, Rothesay & Dunoon and Lochgilphead. A819 included because of its role when A82 or A83 is closed.	<p>Routes generally two lane with speed limits greater than 40mph other than where route passes through villages or small towns. These are primary routes between towns carrying mainly long distance traffic. (Within main towns the route will revert to Main Distributor.)</p> <p>Annual Average Daily Flow usually greater than 1000 vpd.</p> <p>(A83, A814, A815, A816, A818 outwith main towns.)</p>
2	Main Distributor	Primary routes within Main Towns; Main route linking Key Settlements (Local Plan 2.12 Table B highlighted in bold) to the strategic or trunk road networks – Bowmore, Inveraray, Sandbank, Tarbert, Tobermory Main Routes to hospitals, commercial areas, main centres of employment. Principal timber haulage routes.	Routes linking to Strategic Roads that provide -access to hospitals, access to Key Settlements, main routes within urban areas linking industrial/ retail areas and main centres of employment, HGV generators, strategic buildings, ferry terminals. Routes normally two or more lanes with footways in urban areas. Rural routes can vary from two lane to wider (3.5m - 4.5m) single track routes. (B833 included because of high traffic volumes.)
3	Locally important Road	Local access roads linking small towns and villages (Local Plan 2.12 Table B) or significant residential areas to the main distributor, strategic or Trunk road network	Lightly used routes with mainly narrow carriageways. Can be wider in town centres or for bus routes in residential developments.
4	Minor Road	Roads serving a small number of properties	Residential loop roads or cul-de-sac with or without footways. Minor rural routes serving small settlements or individual properties.

- 3.8 This proposed hierarchy uses a tighter definition of Strategic Roads closer to that in Well Maintained Highways. Main Distributors largely consist of the lengths of Strategic Roads within main towns; remaining A roads; and roads accessing Key Settlements, main centres of employment and main HGV generators.
- 3.9 Allocation of roads to Ranks within the hierarchy will allow appropriate treatment specifications, lifecycle plans and inspection/maintenance regimes to be developed for all our roads.
- 3.10 The hierarchy should be periodically reviewed to correct anomalies and to react to changes in the use of any part of the network. A programme of classified traffic counts has been initiated and data from this should inform a review of the definition of road types and the allocation of individual roads to road types.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Road Hierarchy is a fundamental tool for managing and maintaining the road network. This review seeks to improve the logic of the hierarchy and to better relate it to the Roads Maintenance and Asset Management strategy and to the Local Development Plan.
- 4.2 There will be a continuing need to review this hierarchy as knowledge of asset management improves and as more data of the use made of the network becomes available.

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