

Local authorities handed greater control of road network by Department for Transport

From April 2012, the Department for Transport (DfT) handed greater responsibility to English local highway authorities for the management of the roads classification system.

Roads are organised through the roads classification system, along with the dedication of a primary route network to advise people to the recommended route to use. This network then provides easily identifiable routes to access the whole of the country.

While authorities previously undertook the majority of the work involved in reclassifying a road, there was always the need to secure the agreement of the DfT for each new classification. Under the new approach, local highway authorities are now responsible for classifying roads which gives them the power to title 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'U' roads without the need for central government approval.

Michael Dnes, head of roads classification at DfT, said "We are pleased to be able to give local authorities more control over local roads, without the need for the Department to approve every change. We hope this will give councils another tool to use in managing traffic in their areas – and one that is instantly recognisable to motorists."

Additionally, local highway authorities are now responsible for defining the primary route network (PRN) within their authority. The PRN is the most satisfactory route for through traffic between places of traffic importance and is comprised of 'A' roads.

The reasoning behind this change is that local knowledge and local control of roads should help to reduce traffic jams and enable easier flow of people and vehicles through the road system.

In order to carry out these functions, local authorities need to fill in a single form for each change in road classification, submit the form to the central repository at GeoPlace LLP, along with any associated documentary evidence, and then enter it into the National Street Gazetteer (NSG). It then automatically becomes live, without the need to wait for approval.

Simon Bailey, NSG Custodian at GeoPlace commented "Local authorities are well placed in understanding their road networks and identifying the roads that are best suited for traffic. GeoPlace already works very closely with local authorities in maintaining and managing the NSG. Bringing this data together with the primary road network and street classifications can only serve to benefit road users and reduce overall congestion".

This process is limited to English authorities. Welsh and Scottish authorities will continue to operate separate processes through Welsh government and Scottish government.

A schematic illustrating the procedure for classification of roads and the Primary Route Network can be seen overleaf.

Further guidance from the Department for Transport can be found on the NSG website <http://www.thensg.org.uk/iansg/link.htm?nwid=279> or via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-road-classification-and-the-primary-route-network>

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Decide on a scheme

Where necessary consult with neighbouring Authorities

Dedication to or removal from the Primary Route Network

Change to a Road Classification

Is a new classification number required

Yes

Contact the DfT to request a new number

michael.dnes@dft.gsi.gov.uk

New number allocated

Include the newly allocated number when completing the form

No

Complete Form

Can be found at www.thensg.org.uk
(Road Classification/PRN Form Tab)

Submit Form and supporting documents to:

roads.classification@geoplace.co.uk

GeoPlace will acknowledge receipt of documentation

Information automatically transferred to Ordnance Survey and the Department for Transport

Add records to the LSG. The records must be submitted to the NSG by the end of the following month

Dedication is now live!

